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NUMBER I

AGNES BERNAUER*

(A tragedy in five acts)

BY FREDERICK HEBBEL

Translated by Loueen Pattee

CHARACTERS

ERNEST, reigning Duke of Bavaria.

ALBRECHT, his son.

HANS VON PREISING, his chancellor.

MARSHAL VON PAPPENHEIM

IGNACE VON SEYBOLTS DORF

WOLFRAM VON PIENZENAU

OTTO VON BERN

COUNT TÖRRING

NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG

ROLF VON FRAUENHOVEN

HANS VON LAUBELFING, a knight of Ingolstadt.

EMERAN ZU KALMPERG, Judge of Straubing.

KASPAR BERNAUER, barber and surgeon of Augsberg.

AGNES, his daughter.

THEOBALD, his apprentice.

KNIPPELDOLLINGER, Godfather to Agnes.

HERMANN NORDLINGER, Mayor of Augsberg.

BARBARA } Burghers' daughters.

MARTHA }

STACHUS, a servant.

A CHAMBERLAIN at Vohburg and Straubing.

A HERALD.

A LEGATE of the Church.

PEOPLE, KNIGHTS, TROOPS, in great number.

} Knights on the side of
Duke Ernest

} Knights on the side of
Duke Albrecht

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Place: Augsburg, Munich, Vohburg, Regensburg, Straubing.

Time: Between 1420 and 1430.

ACT I

SCENE I

Scene: Augsburg. *Barbershop, doors, windows, cupboards, tables, chairs,*

Theobald (alone, holding a bouquet).—I do not know what to (Holds the flowers up.) Trample you to pieces? Such lovely roses? would be a pity; they are not to blame. Or shall I give them to her? most certainly I'll not. And I should have told Sir Fickleness so at once he seems to think I have neither eyes nor heart nor blood. If,—yes, then what I'll do! I will just try her! There she comes, with her father's porridge! How that must taste! If she should ever cook anything for me I—(conceals the bouquet behind him).

Agnes (enters, bearing the porridge).—Good morning, Theobald!

Theobald.—Many thanks, Miss Agnes, many thanks. Did you sleep well?

Agnes.—I should ask you that! You are so often disturbed at night when there is a brawl—and bandages are needed.

Theobald.—Have you noticed that? (*Aside.*) I'll give her the flowers and the whole message. If she makes a face and rebukes me with: ‘You can stoop to such a thing?’

Agnes.—What are you hiding behind you?

Theobald (shows the flowers).—Oh, yes, I nearly forgot.

Agnes.—Oh, but they are lovely! Give them to me! (*She buries her face in the flowers.*) If only we had a garden! Whose name-day is it to-day? (*Hands them back.*)

Theobald.—Oh, they are for you!

Agnes.—For me? Oh, I thank you. But your uncle must be very feeble then?

Theobald.—My uncle?

Agnes.—Yes, since he is beginning to give away his flowers. Gardeners do not usually do that. Surely you did not buy them!

Theobald.—They are not from me.

Agnes.—Not from you? From whom, then?

Theobald.—Guess!

Agnes.—From—No, it could not be Barbara. She'll not look at me any more, though I do not know why.

Theobald.— It is not ‘she’ at all.

Agnes.— It is not? Nor you? (*She lays the flowers on the table.*)

Theobald.— Thank heavens! She does not guess any one else!

Agnes.— But I must ask you —

Theobald.— Scold me! I only wanted to know —

Agnes.— What?

Theobald.— If you had been flirting with him in church, or possibly pressed his hand while dancing!

Agnes.— Whom do you mean?

Theobald.— It is all right, if you cannot guess. (*He takes the bouquet.*) I'll give them to our old Gertrude,— she shall wear them on her shrunken bosom when she hobbles to market,— and thank him with a curtsey when she passes the house. (*Dances up and down.*) Oh, I could (*sings*)

‘When two join hands together.’

Oh, Miss Agnes, that is a merry song. (*Sings on.*)

‘Who makes a good apprentice-boy,
Becomes in time a master.’

Oh, don't you think that is true?

Agnes.— You are merry too early in the morning. It is better late in the evening.

Theobald.— And yet the birds sing when they awake, not when they go to sleep! (*He takes her hand.*)

Agnes (draws hand away).— What is it?

Theobald.— I only wanted to see if — You did let me hold it once, didn't you?

Agnes.— Oh, the time you had to bleed me!

Theobald.— Of course! (*He takes her hand again.*) Did my blade leave a scar? I did it so awkwardly!

Agnes.— Do you always tremble, the way you did, that day?

Theobald.— Oh, no, only I felt so queer, because I was going to hurt you. How red your blood was! (*To himself.*) I would have gladly bound the wound together with my lips, if her father had not stood by.

(*KNIPPELDOLLINGER appears at the window.*)

Knippeldollinger (calls in at the window).— Good morning, god-daughter!

Agnes.— Good morning, god-father!

Theobald (aside).— That old simpleton, too!

Knippeldollinger.— I dreamed of you last night.

Agnes.— Many thanks for the honor.

Theobald.— You ought to have been dreaming of your funeral instead
That would have been more appropriate.

Agnes.— Oh, shame!

Knippeddollinger.— Never mind, god-daughter, never mind! A baron
has to be a joker! Every one wants to hear something jolly, when he
is having his beard trimmed or his hair clipped. Theobald is a good one
in the business. Only he must not slash people's ears the way he did mine
the other day. Well, are you going to let me go away unsatisfied, to-day, to-morrow?
Not even your little hand?

Agnes.— I have the smallpox again!

Knippeddollinger.— Do not always make the same excuse! Well,
I shall see you again to-day, for I am going to send old Ann for you, to take
you to the tournament. I have secured seats for you. That is what
I really came to tell you.

Agnes.— Thank you! I do not know —

Knippeddollinger.— Oh, such a thing does not happen every day.
Knights, counts, and barons come seldom enough to Augsburg; but the
Duke of Bavaria himself! No one will be absent from the tournament but
the executioner and his men — and they have good reasons for not mingling
with honest Christians. (*Exit.*)

Theobald.— There he hobbles along on his three legs! Has he mentioned
you in his will? Well, he's right; things are going to be lively
and I am glad of it! (*Something is thrown through the window.*) What
was that? It jingles.

Agnes.— Keys!

(*Barbara enters through the middle door.*)

Barbara.— May I get them again?

Agnes.— Barbara?

Barbara.— Agnes!

Agnes.— You have not been here for a long time.

Barbara.— And now I am here to get something — do you see?

Agnes.— We have always been such good friends. What have you
against me now?

Barbara.— Oh, I am not the only one.

Agnes.— Holy Mother! What are you saying?

Barbara.— You probably do not look at your old playmates any more
so that you need not know how they look at you.

Agnes.— It is true, my greeting is not always as cordially returned
as I give it.

Barbara.— I can believe that.

Agnes.— But what shall I do? Tell me.

Barbara.— Do? What you are to do? If things had reached that point we could settle the matter quickly enough!

Agnes.— Barbara!

Barbara.— Just tell me why (*pointing to Theobald*).— Now, there stands another one in open-mouthed admiration! (*To Theobald.*) I am not here, am I? (*To Agnes.*) Are you going to-day? To the tournament, I mean. You are? Well, then, I'll tell them all, so that they can stay at home,— myself first of all!

Agnes.— That is too much. My father must know this.

Barbara.— Heaven forbid! Nobody says anything bad about you!

Agnes.— And yet they shun me! Exclude me!

Barbara.— Agnes, just look at me!

Agnes.— Well!

Barbara.— How would you feel, if — let us go to your room!

Theobald.— I'll not interfere, if confessions are to be made! (*Exit.*)

Barbara.— Now, how would you feel,— if you — how shall I say it? If you were fond of somebody, and he had eyes for nobody but me?

Agnes.— How should I know?

Barbara.— Then I'll tell you! You would — but I'll not make myself ridiculous! You know very well yourself. And do you suppose the others fare any better? (*Notices the bouquet.*) Now where are these from?

Agnes.— I do not know.

Barbara.— You don't? Do you get that many? If they came from my Wolfram — I — And it is quite possible, for he has these very flowers in his garden. Yesterday, the whole day long, I showed marked favor to his cousin,— forced myself to cast loving glances at him,— thinking Wolfram would be raging. But in the evening on the way home, didn't he praise the fellow to the very skies? It has suited him perfectly — I had done him a favor!

Agnes.— Poor girl!

Barbara.— You are to blame, no one but you! Until he knew you, he stuck to me like a burr. He would have bearded the lion in his own den, and brought my glove back to me! And now! Oh, shame!

Agnes.— You are scolding me, and I do not even know *whom* you are talking about!

Barbara (*takes the bouquet*).— I'll get at the bottom of this. I'll take it along.

Agnes.— I do not care.

Barbara.— You ought to be ashamed of estranging every girl's sweetheart from her.

Agnes.— Can you say that I even glance at a single youth?

Barbara.— That is just it. A nun, and still not one! A saint, but I yet in heaven! Why aren't you like the rest of us? Just be lightheart and free, and talk and flirt,— and things will be different.

Agnes.— If I did, you would still be provoked!

Barbara.— Then go to the cloister, put on the veil that no one dares lift! I ask your pardon? Never in all eternity!

Agnes.— Who desires you to?

Barbara.— My confessor! Do you suppose I came of my own accord? Indeed no! I would rather kneel on peas! (*Exit.*)

Agnes.— I am sorry for her! But how am I to help her?

(THEOBALD enters.)

(KASPAR BERNAUER enters, carrying a book wrapped in a red cloth.)

Bernauer (*to AGNES*).— Yes, yes, yes,— if I only do not have to along! Run upstairs and put on your trinkets; the trumpets are signalling now!

Agnes.— No, father, I am going to stay at home!

Bernauer.— What? Why have you been waiting for me then? (To THEOBALD) Go to the stills; the fire surely needs tending. (*Exit THEOBALD.*) Well?

Agnes.— All those eyes, father! It is just as if that many bees were stinging me! And you know they all do stare at me!

(THEOBALD enters.) *

Bernauer.— Just stare back at them! But then, if you prefer to say your rosary,— I have no objections. (*Looks around to THEOBALD.*) No salves mixed up yet? Didn't the cock crow this morning? (*THEOBALD goes to work.*)

Agnes.— Barbara was here. They all hate me. She says I'll spoil the day for them, if I come.

Bernauer.— And for that reason you are going to stay away! That nothing, my child. Then the best knight could not go, either, for he would surely spoil the day for all the rest. And the next best, just as little; and so on down the line to the very last one! Utter foolishness! Go to your room and get ready. (*To THEOBALD.*) Get down the lotion bottle.

(AGNES and THEOBALD exit.)

Bernauer (*alone*).— His Reverence, the Bishop, is right. I can ge

ittle out of it, and especially the pricipal subjects — those from Hippocrates — for they are in Greek. I shall have to carry it back,— unread —

(Enter KNIPPELDOLLINGER.)

Knippeldollinger.— Good morning, Bernauer! You have a book here, haven't you?

Bernauer.— And you have a brand new doublet, haven't you?

Knippeldollinger.— Well, if old folks did not have any new clothes made, many a tailor would starve. (*Opens the book.*) Heaven help us, but that is a confused jumble! And can you read that, as well as the Bishop?

(Enter THEOBALD, carrying bottle, and begins work.)

Bernauer.— What a question!

Knippeldollinger.— How old do you suppose that is?

Bernauer.— Since the crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand four hundred and twenty-six years have passed, but the author of this book, that is, the compiler of it, the man who made it, had been dead more than four hundred years when the Lord appeared in the body upon earth.

Knippeldollinger.— That makes it nearly two thousand years! Is it possible there are people who can keep such books so long? If it were gold, now! But so perishable,— and to think of all the conflagrations and floods, pests and plagues!

Bernauer.— There have always been learned men.

Knippeldollinger.— Oh, of course! Of course! What hasn't there been? When we think it over and carefully consider,— yes, yes! Now, isn't it so? Just tell me yourself.

Bernauer.— I do not know what you mean.

Knippeldollinger.— Ho! Ho! Better than I. You cannot get out of it that way! Well, just as you wish. Where is my god-child? Old Ann is probably waiting.

Bernauer.— Oh, she was inclined not to go at all! (*To THEOBALD.*) Just go up and call her. Bring down the surgical case with you; we shall need it to-day.

(Exit THEOBALD.)

Knippeldollinger.— Aren't you going too? There will be room for you with us.

Bernauer.— The only things that interest me in a tournament are bruises and wounds, and I have an opportunity to see those here, for they bring all the wounded to me.

Knippeldollinger.— But the Duke — the Duke of Bavaria!

Bernauer.— I do not crave his acquaintance, and I hope he will not have to seek mine, for only a broken rib could induce that.

(*AGNES enters in holiday attire, THEOBALD follows.*)

Knippeldollinger.— Just look! (*Taking AGNES's hand.*) Now I have it, after all!

Bernauer (to AGNES).— Shall I make you a new face, with burnt corners as I do for the masquerade, since you do not like to wear this old one?

Agnes.— Come, Godfather.

Knippeldollinger (leading AGNES away, and turning at door).— Do you know Old Snydikus is going to be married again? He is ten years older than I.

Bernauer.— You're wrong. It is only five. Much pleasure to you few accidents!

(*Exit KNIPPELDOLLINGER and AGNES.*)

Bernauer (to himself).— There is no fool like an old fool. We Kaspar, do not be superior. You have your weaknesses too. (*To THEOBALD.*) Go on to the Tournament now, but be back in time. You can see when they bear some one from the field. (*Exit THEOBALD.*) I will tell it once more. I am ashamed to take it back just as I borrowed it. Truly the town of Babylon causes me a great deal more trouble than the fallen man, for if it had not been for that, we would all speak but one tongue. Even in my younger days that bothered me. How I did long to go out into the world, in my apprentice days, to try to discover the unicorn, or the Phoenix, or capture mandrake in Turkey, where I am sure they harm many an innocent man. But then, I always thought: 'You could not understand the people anyway, nor they you,' and so I stayed at home. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II

THE AUGSBURG HOSPICE

DUKE ALBRECHT, COUNT TÖRING, NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG, Sir FRAUNHOVEN, *coming from the lists, with squires and attendants.* BURGOMASTER HERMANN NORDLINGER.

Albrecht.— I thank you, Burgomaster. I thank you for your escort.

BURGOMASTER.— Your Grace, it is my pleasure to perform my duty. (*Calls.*) Bring wine!

Wernberg (to the DUKE aside).— You cannot dismiss him before we drink his wine.

Albrecht.— Frauenhoven!

Frauenhoven.— What is it?

Albrecht.— Did you see the girl? But of course you did,— of course you did.

Frauenhoven.— Which one do you mean?

Albrecht.— Which one! I beg you follow her! I would have dismounted at once, if he had not (*points to the BURGOMASTER*).

Burgomaster (with a goblet).— Your gracious Highness,— the tournament being gloriously ended,— the Free City of Augsburg extends to you a hearty welcome and offers you thanks for honoring her with your cause.

Albrecht (drinks).— Long may Augsburg prosper, as it deserves! Oh, where such rare beauty beams (*passes his hand over his forehead*). Yes, the city merits it (*turning aside*). What, Frauenhoven, are you still here?

Frauenhoven.— But —

Burgomaster.— I hope — accordingly —

Albrecht.— This evening at the ball, of course. Nothing can keep me from it, provided she too,— Pardon my confusion — a message from my father —

Burgomaster.— Aside from extending the invitation to you, according to the privilege of my office, I must add — as a patrician — that not only the aristocracy are to be there, but also the guilds.

Albrecht.— I would wish the whole town to be there.

Burgomaster.— I commend myself unto your Grace! (*Exit*.)

Albrecht (to FRAUENHOVEN).— And now, my dear heart's friend, quick, quick! Or rather,— all of you — you down one street, you another, and you a third!

Frauenhoven.— But this morning you gave me orders to pursue Wernberg. Have you forgotten that he has run away with your betrothed, the Countess of Wurtemberg?

Albrecht.— Do not mention her name to me.

Wernberg.— And I was to go to her father to demand the keys of Göppingen Castle, because her flight prevented the marriage agreed upon and therefore the forfeit would have to be paid!

Torring.— And I was to bear the news to the court and your father in Munich.

Albrecht.— That is all past. It is as if it had never happened. I rejoice that Elizabeth has severed a tie — which otherwise I would have

been forced to tear asunder. I do not demand even a tile from the roof Göppingen, nor one farthing's ransom — for I might as well demand payment for living or breathing as for my new freedom! As for my father — I owes me a favor,— this he shall grant me,— that he take the same stand this matter that I do!

Törring.— This is a very sudden change.

Wernberg.— And costs Bavaria twenty-five thousand guldens.

Albrecht.— I do not know you any more! Squire, remove my armor. I am going myself, and in this attire I would drag after me a train of a hundred curious folk. (*A squire removes his coat of mail, etc.*) There lies the duke,— do you see? (*Unbuckles his sword.*) And there the knight. Bring me flowers, so that I may scatter them before her, wherever I may find her. (*Putting on a cap.*) Would any one recognize me now?

Törring.— Without your sword? Every one would believe himself mistaken.

Albrecht.— Be patient with me, good friends! (*Exit.*)

Törring.— Do you comprehend that?

Wernberg.— Duke Ernest's eyes will open wide with surprise. He will hesitate somewhat longer about losing twenty-five thousand guldens.

Frauenhoven.— Brothers, judge not, that we be not judged. We all have the same thing behind or before us. If you did not understand before, you will now understand why since the earliest times woman has been held responsible for man's downfall. She affects him like an intoxicant; but this intoxication can be cured by indulgence, as the other by restraint. The deeper the drought the quicker sobriety. Therefore we must stand by him.

Wernberg.— But we will take note of his strange remarks. We may be able to make use of them again, if only to protect ourselves. ‘Have you any eyes?’ ‘Bring me flowers.’ ‘I do not know you any more.’ I'll store those up. You gather up whatever drops this evening, for without a doubt this new Adam will see his Eve at the ball. Perhaps she is the Angel of Augsburg, Törring, — the Angel of Augsburg.

Wernberg.— That is what they call a barber's daughter here — Agnes Bernauer, whose beauty they say has driven half the town mad. Shall we hunt up her father's shop? We can have our beards trimmed and, who knows, we may have a chance to see this miracle of beauty.

Frauenhoven.— Agreed! (*All exit.*)

SCENE III

Great ballroom, gaily adorned with the banners of the guilds and the coats-of-arms of the patricians. BURGOMASTER HERMANN NORDLINGER and NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG enter. *The guests rapidly assemble. The masters of the guilds receive.*

Burgomaster.— Yes, your lordship, ever since that miserable St. Katherine's eve, when we had to admit the rabble to our council, things are pretty well mixed here. Pearls and peas all in one sack. The duke will find difficulty in selecting them. I am surprised that he cares to come.

Wernberg.— You have not grown accustomed to the new order of things yet? That happened some time ago.

Burgomaster.— Not so long ago that the hope of a return to the good old times has wholly vanished. Just look at that portly person! Master of the bakers' guild, and doing the honors of the town! Whenever he greets a new arrival he either elbows a man's chest or with his awkward bow knocks somebody's shins behind him. Didn't I tell you so? Just like a kicking horse! And that is what we have to grow accustomed to!

Wernberg.— You ought to have made stronger resistance.

Burgomaster.— We were taken by surprise. Empire and Emperor should have stood by us better in our need. Why was his majesty obliged to affix his seal to the accursed charter of the guilds, which was forced upon us? We had all we could do to keep ourselves from being taken up by the butchers and glovemakers and having our old names exchanged for new ones, for that is what they desired.

(Enter FRAUENHOVEN and TÖRRING: DUKE ALBRECHT.)

Burgomaster.— His Grace, the duke! (Hastens to greet the entering duke.)

Albrecht (steps up to FRAUENHOVEN, TÖRRING, and WERNBERG).— Here you are!

Frauenhoven.— We have been hunting all afternoon.

Albrecht.— And found?

Wernberg.— Just now.

Albrecht.— Oh, you mean me! A valuable find that. Thanks.

Frauenhoven.— I wandered about alone —

Albrecht.— You fared better than I. You found a trace of her?

Frauenhoven.— Yes.

Albrecht.— Why didn't I meet you before?

Frauenhoven.— The ravishing creature! Oh, indeed you were right in asking if we had eyes.

Albrecht.— You love her, too?

Frauenhoven.— Could I help it?

Albrecht.— Frauenhoven,— that is a great misfortune. I believe you cannot help it. Indeed, it would be insanity for me to desire you to help. Here your knight's allegiance to me is at an end,— in fact, friendship too; for now begins the struggle for life and death — now it is a question whose veins a drop of blood is to be left.

(*FRAUENHOVEN smiles.*)

Albrecht.— You smile. Pray do not. If you do not feel as I do, you are not worthy to look at her.

Frauenhoven.— Those jet black eyes! And how she holds her head! It makes you long to throw your arms about her neck ! And then her chestnut hair!

Albrecht.— Are you drivelling? The curls are golden, that play about her brow, —and never was a head so humbly bowed,— and her eyes cannot be black. No, no, they flashed like the phosphorescence of the waves which are strange and wonderful, suddenly darts from the deep blue waters, then suddenly vanished.

Frauenhoven.— Your lordship, I know nothing of her. It was only jest, which you must ascribe to this place of merrymaking.

Albrecht.— Then flee, all of you, that it may not become terribly earnest, for I tell you no one can look at her without the greatest danger.

(Enter AGNES, accompanied by her FATHER and KNIPPELDOLLINGER.)

Albrecht.— There she is!

Wernberg and Frauenhoven (simultaneously).— Wonderously fair, that is true!

Törning.— And true that she is the Angel of Augsburg. There is her father.

Albrecht.— Do you know her?

Törning.— She is generally called the Angel of Augsburg. She is the barber's daughter, your lordship. We just had him trim our beards. See,— the man is skillful, isn't he? It would not hurt yours to go to him either. (*He steps up to the group.*) Good evening, Master, here we meet again.

Bernauer.— For me — a great honor.

Albrecht (follows. To AGNES).— Fair maiden, why did you not bestow the rewards upon the combatants in the jousts? What had passed through your hands would be more precious than gold — more rare than jewels — even if it were only a spray plucked from the nearest shrub.

Bernauer.— My daughter is not accustomed to such speeches, gracious sir. Catechise her on the chief articles of our most blessed faith, and she will be able to answer.

Agnes.— Come, come, father, the Duke of Bavaria intends to address his betrothed thus, and is merely practicing on a burgher's daughter.

Bernauer.— Well said, my daughter; but you cannot answer,— so thank his lordship, and come.

Albrecht.— You are going? Then you must allow me to accompany you! Your shadow will desert you sooner than I.

Bernauer.— Your equals would be envious.

Töring (grasping *BERNAUER'S arm*).— Bavaria's Duke has no equal here! (*Leads him away.*)

(*WERNBERG joins KNIPPELDOLLINGER, and both follow.*)

Albrecht (*To AGNES, who likewise follows, endeavoring to reach her father's side.*).— Fair maid—I was not mistaken—your eyes followed me this morning. Dare I claim the honor of the glance, or was it only my Venetian plume?

Agnes.— I trembled for you, sir, for you were riding to meet the enemy, and I thought of the harm that might befall you.

Albrecht.— And you were not indifferent to what might happen to me?

(*They are lost in the crowd.*)

Barbara (*with MARTHA and the other girls*).— Ha, ha, ha! Now I told you so, didn't I? That it would be better to stay at home. Be merry if you can.

Martha.— Why, things are going beautifully. If the duke takes her with him, then she will not be in our way any more than if she ascended into heaven.

Barbara.— Take her with him? What are you thinking of? He'll leave her here, you may be sure. But she'll be more superior than ever, since the duke too has succumbed to her charms. Just see how every one is staring at them and whispering.

(*BARBARA and MARTHA pass on.*)

(*Enter WERNBERG with KNIPPELDOLLINGER.*)

Burgomaster (*approaches with young lady*).— Sir, my cousin Juliana Pentinzer. When only fourteen years old she delivered an address of welcome in Latin to his Highness, the Emperor, in the name of the Council. I should like to introduce her to his Grace.

Wernberg (*walking out with him*).— Afterwards, Burgomaster, afterwards! (*In a low voice.*) The duke has been given such a warm welcome

by the citizens that they have almost split their throats with cheering, and you see how grateful he appears. (*They pass on.*)

Albrecht (with AGNES).— Now, you must say something. What your answer?

Agnes.— It seems as if I heard the tones of one more violin, so sweet the sound, so fair the dream it brings!

Albrecht.— But I am asking you if you can love me?

Agnes.— You should ask a princess that,— surely not me.

Albrecht.— I implore you — an answer!

Agnes.— Spare me, or make the request only as you would to a poor creature who is in danger of an overwhelming misfortune.

Albrecht.— These words.

Agnes.— Do not analyze them, I beseech you! Never snatch away the hand clasped for protection over one's heart!

Bernauer (who has been following with TÖRRING and trying to approach AGNES).— To-morrow, count, to-morrow!

Knippeldollinger (who is walking along beside them with WERNBERG) (To TÖRRING).— I knew a man once who could cure by magic.

Albrecht.— Agnes, you misjudge me. I do love you.

Bernauer (stepping between AGNES and ALBRECHT).— Come, my child, you too have an honorable name to save. (*Starts to lead her away.*)

Albrecht.— I really do love her, but I never would have told her so I had not intended to add, I sue for her hand.

Wernberg.— Your Grace!

Frauenhoven.— Albrecht, remember your father!

Torring.— Think of the emperor and the empire. You are a Wittelbach. That is only by way of reminder.

Albrecht.— Now, my good man, are you still afraid of her losing her honor?

Bernauer.— No, your Grace, but fifty years ago she would not have dared to appear at a tournament without being flogged for it, for then such a privilege would never have been granted to the daughter of a man who set the knights' broken bones and dressed their wounds. That is only a way of reminder.

Albrecht.— And fifty years hence, every angel like her shall occupy a throne on earth, for I shall set the example.

Frauenhoven.— He is insane! (*To ALBRECHT.*) Do not proceed any further to-night. Every one is now on the alert, and at all events this affair must be kept secret.

Albrecht (to BERNAUER).— May I come to-morrow?

Bernauer.— What good would it do for me to say no?

Albrecht.— Agnes?

Agnes.— Who was telling me this very morning that I should enter the loister? I think I see a finger plainly pointing that way.

Albrecht.— You grow faint. Let me support you, and if the whole world falls you will be safe.

Bernauer.— Your Grace, we take our leave before she swoons.

(Exit *BERNAUER, AGNES, and KNIPPELDOLLINGER.*)

Albrecht (following).— Oh, I must —

Frauenhoven.— Not a step! For her sake, if not for your own.

Albrecht.— Perhaps you are right.

Frauenhoven.— Talk with the other guests now — with all of them — long time, I beseech you!

Albrecht.— I should have loved so to hear my name, just once, upon her lips! But why wish to celebrate Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday all at once? (*Mingles with the guests.*)

(*BURGOMASTER approaches with young lady.*)

ACT II

SCENE I

Scene: Tavern in Augsburg. Early morning. WERNBERG, TÖRRING, and FRAUENHOVEN.

Wernberg.— The matter is growing serious.

Törring.— Very serious. The line of succession depends upon a pair of eyes.

Frauenhoven.— Not that bad yet! You forget, Duke William also has a son who is a possible heir to Bavaria's throne.

Törring.— But who is weak and sickly, and only four years old. Have you ever seen the poor little lad? I know what I am talking about. The Munich line depends practically on this pair of eyes, and if we do not succeed in interfering with Albrecht's mad project, he will be the father of children who do not even rank with yours and mine. What will happen then? Even now Bavaria is torn into three factions, like a cake that three starving wretches are fighting over. Shall it be completely ruined? And what will be the outcome if we cannot prevent this misfortune?

Wernberg.— Quite true. From all quarters of the country they would

appear with their yellowed charters and mouldy treaties, and when they had quarreled and fought long enough over them, the emperor would set the matter in his own way, for while the bears are tearing each other to pieces, the eagle always flies off with the booty.

Törring.— Well, then, let us take precautions.

Frauenhoven.— But how begin? You ought to have heard him the way home last night! And isn't every word he says true? For who one of us can boast of ever having seen such an angel of beauty before came to Augsburg?

Törring.— Do you think I am a fool, who intends to conjure the fire? That is not my idea. Let it burn to ashes for all I care. But I believe that fuel for *this* fire can be more cheaply bought than with crowns and thrones. Let me arrange it. I tell you they are good, sensible people. Didn't the old barber stand there yesterday as if the archangel Michael himself were asking to become his son in law? And the girl! She looked as if she had been invited to ascend into heaven, instead of to dance. Just pay heed, I shall settle things satisfactorily. (*Exit.*)

Frauenhoven.— He's mistaken,— in the father and the daughter, well as in the duke.

Wernberg.— We must appeal to the duke's conscience.

Frauenhoven.— And why? Simply to have done our duty in case we should be called to account some day? Borrow Gabriel's trumpet, and sound it if you can make him listen. I am content if we can keep it secret for the present. Lazy Wenzel of Prague educated him, and the notions then got into his head to the sound of flute and violin, God himself will never be able to eradicate.

Albrecht (*entering*).— Well, my friends, what do you think of the glorious morning that is turning everything to gold, as perfect as if made to order? But why are you all standing there like that, as if you were about to enter the fray immediately and were still undecided about your last will and testament.

Wernberg.— I hope to look differently then, although I have now no father to pull me out whenever I get into deep water, as you have.

Albrecht.— Yes, that's true. In that I have the advantage. I can jump boldly into the very jaws of death, like the lion and the mouse, and my sire would snatch me back to safety, even from the throat of a devouring monster.

Wernberg.— That was proven to you at your first battle at Alling, he had not been there —

Albrecht.— Then my first battle would have been my last one as well.

and I should have never heard the sweet music of the victor's trumpet. But why mention that? I should never have beheld my Agnes.

Wernberg.— Your Agnes?

Albrecht.— Oh, I owe an infinite debt of gratitude to him, greater than ever son to father before!

Wernberg.— You realize that?

Albrecht.— Just since yesterday. Some day your hour will come too, and you will understand better. Then I can say more. If you ever feel as if you had a million lips, all opening to draw in the deep breath of life, when you do not know whether it is joy or pain that puts your heart in a whirl, when your breast is bursting, and you tremble with heat and cold at the same time, crying out in doubt, ‘Surely, joy, joy, the supreme of joy!’ If, like me, you suddenly understand this mystic meaning, while groping dizzyly for it between life and death with your last breath, then, then, not before.

Wernberg.— Your lordship, one request.

Albrecht.— What is it?

Wernberg.— Just picture your father's amazement when he hears of this.

Albrecht.— Well?

Wernberg.— But very vividly, with that expression which his face wears when he not only wishes to refuse a request but to force it back into one's throat, so that instead of asking for sugar plums, one begs for a beating!

Albrecht.— Well and good!

Wernberg.— Can you see him plainly? Now ask yourself if you would care to repeat to him all that you have been ranting to us about intoxicating joy and pain!

Albrecht.— To him? Most surely, for I had a mother: but to you, not for the whole world would I mention it again.

Wernberg.— Your mother, sir, was a princess of Milan.

Albrecht.— And would she not have been my mother just the same, if she had not happened to be a princess of Milan? She was an ideal woman. Would not that have sufficed?

Wernberg.— I doubt it. But if so, there would be nothing now to prevent your marrying the Angel of Augsburg, for you would have no claim to Bavaria's throne.

Albrecht.— You think not, Sir Knight? Who can tell? Who knows what would happen if I should appeal to my people, saying, ‘Behold, they say I am not worthy to be your monarch, because my father lifted up one of your daughters to his level, one who could best tell him what your needs

are? They say I am not worthy to be your ruler because I am your own brother. Who knows what they will do, these stanch old Bavarians, who one day my son shall summon them to assemble in a forest of oaks, as in the days of yore, and speak such words to them? Who knows whether the last peasant may not be turned into a knight, and whether the scythe may not clash against the sword, till the whole German empire begins to totter and mighty Charlemagne in his tomb at Aachen reaches out for his crown in terror.

Wernberg.— Most gracious lord, do not misjudge me. Nothhaft von Wernberg cannot advise you to leap over the precipice, but when you can he can jump after you.

Albrecht.— That is nobly said, my friend. Come, then.

SCENE II

Scene: Augsburg. The Barber Shop. AGNES, BERNAUER, and THEOBALD hiding behind a cabinet.

Agnes.— Here, father?

Bernauer.— Here we shall see him. Nowhere else. How do you feel my daughter? Not quite the same as other mornings, when you awake do you? Well, that's perfectly natural. Girls are fond of hesitating on the threshold, from timidity or a love of teasing, even when they are eager to enter, knowing the bridegroom has long been waiting. But you, poor dearest, do not even have time to make the bridal wreath.

Agnes.— Your decision is settled, then?

Bernauer.— There is but one way, and if you are ready, I can answer for him.

Agnes.— You can?

Bernauer.— I know the symptoms, even if it was a long time ago that suffered from the same fever. He's a good faithful soul. (*Takes something from pocket.*) See this!

Agnes.— My necklace! I thought I put that away last evening before going to bed.

Bernauer.— That's quite impossible, for Theobald found it in the street as he came along behind us.

Agnes.— Theobald?

Bernauer.— Yes, you did not see him either, did you? Just imagine! Ever since the duke and his nobles have been here, the foolish lad has been

secretly following us every evening, upon our leaving the house, and has waited until we returned. He is a fellow!

Agnes.— I am happy to see his devotion to you.

Bernauer.— I have concluded the best answer for this hot-headed duke would be your marrying Theobald this very morning. You know you owe him a finder's reward.

Agnes.— What are you saying, father?

Bernauer.— Then you two could go to meet the duke together, while I extend my hands in blessing over your heads, calling out to him, ‘Thus has heaven decreed, and what God has joined let no man put asunder! ’

Agnes.— Father!

Bernauer.— Well, speak, my daughter. Shall it be?

Agnes.— Never! Not in all eternity.

Bernauer.— Oh, you mean not to-day.

Agnes (blushing).— I mean —

Bernauer (interrupting).— To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow.

Theobald (coming out from behind the cabinet).— What's the use, master? I can stand it to-day as well as ever.

Bernauer (to AGNES).— There, now.

Theobald.— Don't scold her. I myself am to blame. I ought not to have followed you — not this time, at any rate.

Agnes.— Theobald, you are hurting me.

Theobald.— I know it, Miss Agnes, I know it. I feel too that I — O God above, I must not even mention my unhappiness. You could never have been intended for me. I need only to look at you to realize it. Master, may I have a few moments for myself? I shall come back in an hour, there are not apt to be many patrons at this time of day. (*He seizes AGNES's hands.*) Agnes, I wish I might transfer my love for you to some one worthier, — not to relieve my own heart, O God, no, that would be the greatest sacrifice I could make, and I could only make it in the hope of giving you happiness; but believe me, you would be happy if what is burning here (*he beats his breast*) inflamed a worthier bosom. (*Exit.*)

Bernauer.— I can well believe that.

Agnes.— Do not be angry, father, — if I had dreamed —

Bernauer.— Not another word about it. Things are as they are. Who can go against the stars? But I shudder to think of your future, my daughter, for (*pointing to his barber's bowl*) such a thing and a coronet were never made to go together.

Agnes.— You did not let me finish before. I could not give my hand to Theobald nor to any one else —

AGNES BERNAUER

Bernauer.— And pray, why not?

Agnes.— Because — Oh, I could not!

Bernauer.— Then he really does possess your heart. Curse the tournament!

Agnes.— But I could flee to the Mother of Mercies,— I could enter the cloister.

Bernauer.— And leave your duke outside?

Agnes.— No-o —

Bernauer.— What would you be doing in a cloister then?

Count Törring (entering).— Good morning, Master Bernauer! You too, young lady. Your hand, good sir! We greatly enjoyed seeing you the ball yesterday evening, and indeed, you are truly worthy of winning duke's favor.

Agnes.— That is saying too much, sir.

Törring.— Heaven forbid! If Emperor Wenzel had an attendant like you I can pardon him for believing for a time that he and she were quite alone in the world; but I cannot pardon him for carrying things too far as never coming to his senses again, for she had to pay the penalty, and might have realized that beforehand. (*Looks sharply at Agnes.*) Poor Susanna! Fair young child! How pale you must have been when the stern, unrelenting Bohemians burned you at the stake, led by bishops and archbishops, as if it were a sacred rite. You were not an enchantress either unless this girl before me is one too.

Bernauer.— Did that happen in the joyous land of song and dance?

Törring.— Oh, yes, and I suppose some one has turned the tale into verse e'er this. People are fond of singing such things when they are merry.

Bernauer.— What do you say to that, my daughter?

Agnes.— Shame upon the emperor who let such a thing happen!

Törring.— He lay in a dungeon, and his angry nobles stood with drawn swords at the gate — executioner or rescuer, he knew not which would be the first to knock at his door.

Agnes.— Then it was her fate, and she will probably find out what some day.

Törring.— Bernauer, a word in private with you.

Bernauer.— Leave us, Agnes. Put away your necklace now.

(*Exit AGNES.*)

Bernauer.— We are alone now, sir.

Törring.— Well, my good man, what do you think? Tell me.

Bernauer.— I do not know what you are referring to.

Törring.— Oh, I'm thinking the duke has probably arisen this morning in the same frame of mind that he went to bed last night.

Bernauer.— To be sure! Eight hours are only eight hours.

Törring.— That is my opinion too. Therefore we must come to an agreement in time. Accordingly (*picks up a razor playfully*) your sword, is it not?

Bernauer.— If you please.

Törring.— My own is somewhat longer. (*Tapping his sword.*) But what I intended to say was this: The duke loves your daughter. *He loves her.* If every woman were so loved, this would be heaven on earth.

Bernauer.— Before a potion and after it are always two very different things, and must always be.

Törring.— You've been married,— perhaps are still, and are making excuses for yourself; but I can assure you the duke is burning like a crackling bonfire when a good wind is blowing, but (*he picks up a shaving bowl*) your helmet?

Bernauer.— Are all Bavarians so witty?

Törring.— But see here, see here, it would do. (*Pretending to set the shaving bowl on BERNAUER's head.*) Did you never try that? I assure you the duke is in such a flame that he can roast chestnuts by simply looking at them. But as far as courting, marrying, is concerned (*picks up the cupping instrument*), this thing,— snip, snap—you doubtless have this in your coat of arms? Or do you have a naked arm with a spurting vein like the one I saw painted by the outer door?

Bernauer.— Neither, Sir Count.

Törring.— Neither one? Well, then, to come to the point (if it is of any use) the duke's love springs from his heart; his courting,— well, you saw that for yourself. It was intoxication. Perhaps, indeed, for aught I know, the influence of wine.

Bernauer.— I am glad to hear it. But this message does not concern me alone. (*Calls.*) Agnes!

Törring.— You are glad? Then I was not wrong in my judgment of you. Give me your hand again!

Bernauer (*withholding his hand*).— You have already honored me sufficiently.

(Enter AGNES.)

Törring.— If we should settle on her a moderate fortune for life, just between ourselves,— the duke has splendid estates from his mother, you know.

AGNES BERNAUER

Bernauer.— Listen carefully, my child. (*To TÖRRING.*) Well?

Törring.— Oh, you called her. You can speak for yourself.

Bernauer.— Very well. (*To AGNES.*) The duke withdraws his suit.

Törring.— Oh, not by any means!

Bernauer.— He withdraws his suit for your hand. That he leaves you. He is not without shame. As for the rest, he would like to keep you— for a time at least, I know not if forever. (*AGNES drops into a seat.*) There is her answer. Now, hear mine.

Agnes.— No, father, I can defend myself. Last evening robbed me speech and senses. This morning gives them back to me. You may say the duke, your lord, I would not have considered his first proposition possible, but God knows I would have believed the second one much less so.

(Enter ALBRECHT.)

Bernauer.— There he is himself.

Albrecht.— Yes, here he is! (*To AGNES.*) Was he expected? (*AGNES turns away.*) If on my way to you a flaming chariot had come down to earth from the skies above, with every wheel set with stars, I would not have ascended. And you?

Agnes.— Gracious sir, yesterday I had not the courage to look at you. To-day I should think you would scarcely be bold enough to look at me!

Albrecht.— What have I done to you?

Agnes.— Is that nothing, your lordship? You could never bestow great an honor upon me, not even by placing a crown on my brow, that would atone for this insult.

Albrecht.— Insult?

Agnes.— Is it not an insult, is not that to me an insult which, offered to a highborn lady would snatch every blade from its scabbard in the entire family, even to the tenth remove, to be pointed at you? Your lordship too am one of God's creatures.

Albrecht (*catching sight of TÖRRING.*)— Törring, you here? What do you mean?

Agnes.— I too am one of God's own creatures. He can make something nobler of me if it is His holy will; of you He may make something lowlier. For everything on earth is merely a trial, and high and low must exchange places, if they do not stand the test in His presence. Your lordship never hurt any one again as you have hurt me. As such a thing could never be expected of you it must be doubly bitter. (*To her father.*) Now, father, to the cloister. Now I shall take nothing from the world with me but never-ending horror.

Albrecht.—Agnes, yesterday I asked for your hand; to-day I come for our answer, while my friends bring the priest who is to unite us. Is that an insult?

Törring (stepping forward).—The duke knows nothing of this, upon my word of honor. I was only voicing my own ideas. I thought—well, to err is human, they say.

Albrecht.—You offered her insult? To my betrothed? For that—*draws his sword*.

Törring.—Now, my lord, for that. (*Steps up to AGNES and kisses her hand.*) You know I am not a coward, but it would not be well to lessen the number of your friends, and now that I really know her, I am her friend too. Indeed, I shall serve her with the last breath in my body; and it seems to me—bear this in mind!—it seems to me death already takes me by the hand. (*To AGNES.*) That is the word of a nobleman of Bavaria; not one of the lesser ones, either. And may I be called a dishonorable wretch if anything happens to you now as long as I can prevent it. (*To ALBRECHT.*) But you, my lord, be not angry because I drew aside the veil rather rudely. It was to your advantage as well as hers that I looked into her face. (*Steps back.*)

Albrecht.—She is silent! You offended her, not me.

Agnes.—Only from you was the thrust a deadly one. Now father—

Bernauer.—She's sorry for her severe words, your lordship,—she would like to recall them. You see she is almost overcome.

Albrecht.—And not for the world would I have missed them. Good master, two children must have been exchanged in their cradles. An emperor's daughter was brought to you, and an emperor has reared your son. Gaze upon her,—do you still know her? But now you know at last who you are, Agnes. That is proven by the noble fire flashing in your eye and glowing on your cheek. You have forgotten now that you have not always worn the purple and drunk from a goblet of gold. Come to my arms before you have time to recollect.

Bernauer.—Agnes!

Agnes.—Father, not a word about the danger! Do not remind me that it needs great courage, or else I might—

Albrecht (opens his arms to her).—What? What?

Agnes (sinks on his breast).—If I should have to pay for this with death, now it would not matter.

Albrecht (embracing her).—My Agnes!

Agnes (drawing away).—But no amount of courage can justify it. You are a prince!

Albrecht.—And as such, like any one of my ancestors, I may make a fresh start.

Agnes.— But your father!

Albrecht.— I am his son, not his slave.

Agnes.— And suppose your people should object.

Albrecht.— They may object until they once more rejoice.

Agnes.— And should your father pronounce a curse.

Albrecht.— Even so, God will give His blessing.

Agnes.— And if your father draws his sword.

Albrecht.— Then he gives me the right to lay hand on my own.

Agnes.— And still we could — and yet, you could be happy?

Albrecht.— Far happier than if I had to give you up. But, Agnes, n
I know your heart, — come to me! (*Enfolding her.*) There is nothing
more for you to do. The rest is my affair. Upon what did God found the
world, if not on this depth of love which draws me to you and you to me?

(Enter FRAUENHOVEN and WERNBERG.)

Is everything ready?

Frauenhoven.— Yes, we have found a priest who will risk the disfavor
of the old duke for the favor of the young one.

Wernberg.— But only on condition that the affair be kept secret
long as possible.

Albrecht.— What do you say to that, my Agnes?

Agnes.— As long as only God knows it, none of my dreadful fore-
bodings will be fulfilled.

Albrecht.— Well, then. Now, my friends, where and when?

Frauenhoven.— This evening, at the stroke of ten, in the Chapel of St.
Mary's. We must all come in disguise, as if to a burial.

Albrecht.— Agreed. And to-morrow to Vohburg. Agnes! Vohburg
is a little red castle on the green banks of the Danube, which my mother
gave peace to her ashes! — gave me as a reward for my first battle. Just hear
what I am saying. You will smile at yourself there whenever you think
of this morning. There are more larks there than sparrows elsewhere, and for
nearly every tree a nightingale. I shall settle it upon you. Pray accept
the merry bird cage as it is, and, if you can express gratitude for a gift you
have never seen, call me now by my name!

Agnes (weeping).— My Albrecht!

Albrecht.— And with tears?

Agnes.— Forgive me! How could I help suffering still for those bitter
words, more for your sake than my own. It seemed to me as if the bright
star in all the firmament had suddenly burned out. But now I feel as if life
had already bestowed upon me more than is my due. My father!

Bernauer (*coming forward*).—They shall leave father and mother and
ing to one another. My blessings on you, my child. You are following
od's command, I suppose. May He be with you. (*Places his hand upon
er head.*)

Albrecht.—For me, your blessings, too.

Bernauer.—You fear you will otherwise have to do without any.
Lays his hand on ALBRECHT's head.)

ACT III

SCENE I

Munich. *The Royal Cabinet.* On one wall hang two maps; on the
hers the portraits of the Bavarian princes. DUKE ERNEST is discovered
standing in front of the maps.

Ernest.—I cannot leave it, and it always arouses my anger anew. That
as Bavaria once, and this is Bavaria now. Like full moon and new moon,
ide by side! And if five centuries had even intervened between the two
lases! But there must be many an old man still living who can plainly
emember the time when all *that* belonged to us,—Tyrol, Brandenburg,
nd sturdy Holland, and what not besides,—who, moreover, can enumerate
ne whole list of follies which lost us all of them. (*Steps in front of the
portraits.*) What wretched havoc you have made! Even twenty-four
ours before the judgment day it would have been too bad. And you had
uch a good example in your neighbor Austria. Rudolph von Hapsburg,
y clever turning and constant overturning on a sticky soil, could have
oll'd a grain of sand to a globe, and what have you done? Through your
manipulations a globe has dwindled to a grain of sand! (*Walks on,—stops
n front of one of the portraits.*) Emperor Louis, bold warrior, who with-
stood every enemy save the last one, concealed and nameless, you are
rowning down upon your grandson! I understand you, you are right,
aultfinding is for women, the man's work is to mend. Well, I have been
atching and piecing for a whole lifetime, trying to get the old Elector's
mantle together again, and I think you will give me your hand in approval
when we meet. (*Enter STACHUS.*) What is it?

Stachus.—The man from Cologne has come,—the clever one with the
queer name. He says he was sent for.

Ernest.—He has brought something, then. Bring it to me! (*Exit
STACHUS.*) He is bringing the designs for the decoration of the Memorial
Chapel, where lies the dust of her who bore my son. (*Enter STACHUS, with*

a roll of papers.) (*After looking through papers carefully.*) The designs all too elaborate. Come here, Stachus, can you tell me what this is?

Stachus.— Oh, your Grace, I am only a simple man.

Ernest.— That does not matter. You should be able to understand it, too. Tombs should be silent, or talk so plainly that even the simple can understand. He was ordered to make it exactly as I told him: the Saviour, our all merciful Redeemer, with His arms extended over my dear wife, kneeling at his feet, just as they paint St. Martha, but with her face covered. And below — bowed before them — my son Albrecht and myself praying for her good soul. Tell him that. He can put this thing upon my own tomb. I do not want it. I had expected something different from Cologne. That is not worth the cost of a journey here. (*STACHUS carries out paper.*) That would have been something to the liking of your sweet pious soul, my gentle Elizabeth,— all those winged angels, with trumpets blowing as if the Mother of Heaven were making a second ascension. And I had explained everything to him so carefully! (*Enter CHANCELLOR PREISING.*) Are you there, Preising? It is well. Do you know what we have decided? We are going to begin an hour earlier after to-day. Who man knows whether he may not have to stop his work before he is tired? How many plans my wife, the Duchess, had, and now, she lies there! What have you brought?

Preising.— First of all, there are constantly increasing complaints about the usury of the Jews.

Ernest.— People must arrange their business affairs so that they can get along without the Jews. No one can be impoverished by them, who does not borrow of them, not even if they ask fifty per cent.

Preising.— I mention it again simply for the sake of the Jews themselves. In Nurnberg they are being killed like dogs, and, as you know, bad examples are more contagious than good ones.

Ernest.— My Jews shall so act that they do not deserve death, and this will probably put an end to it. I shall not interfere with these affairs. You can ask my brother if he wishes to.

Preising.— If he should desire to, it would be the first time that Duke William wished something you opposed.

Ernest.— Just on that account, one must never neglect him. Now continue. But stop! this first. Money has come to us from an unexpected source. The Count of Würtemburg has to hand over all that he has saved of birch rods in the education of his daughter, and pay heavy interest in the bargain. We can accomplish many things with his twenty-five thousand gulden.

Preising.—Let us have our hands on them first.

Ernest.—Don't you think the count is an honest man?

Preising.—The most honest in the world.

Ernest.—Well, then, he's surely not a beggar.

Preising.—Your Lordship, the Count of Würtemberg will not forfeit
such a sum, I tell you.

Ernest.—He will not? Have I not his promise? Have not hostages
been sent me? What objections can he have?

Preising.—He is displeased, because Duke Albrecht made no effort at
all to regain his runaway bride,—because he went to the Augsburg ball
instead of helping in the pursuit of the abductor.

Ernest.—What was there left to regain? She had become another's
wife before we heard of the elopement. The count would better be careful.
I'll seize the Castle of Göpping before he is aware. One ride more does not
matter.

Preising.—I beg and beseech you not to become incensed! As the
actor at Alling, your son was never talked about so much as he was as the
avalier of the Augsburg ball.

Ernest.—I know, I know,—and it vexes me sorely. But I have
ready put an end to that. Two years ago Erick of Brunswick said to me,
It is too bad, Ernest, that you have only one son, and that one promised.”
I remembered that, and the very day when I learned of the elopement of
Albrecht's betrothed I sent a proposal for the hand of the Countess of
Brunswick. Just yesterday the acceptance arrived.

Preising.—And Albrecht, will he consent?

Ernest.—Consent? What do you mean? You may be sure I have
made no inquiries in regard to that, but take it as a matter of course.

Preising.—You sent a messenger to him?

Ernest.—One? Three, four, I sent to him with warnings and admoni-
tions, and with the last one I sent a letter.

Preising.—Well, the last one has just returned and is dismounting.

Ernest.—It took him long enough.

Preising.—And still he made a speedy journey, for he is not returning
from Augsburg, but from Vohburg. The duke had left the imperial city
before your messenger's arrival.

Ernest.—Then the affair with the barber's daughter is over, and I
might have spared myself the stupid letter.

Preising.—Anything but ended, for he had taken the girl with him.

Ernest.—That is going too far. I should never have done such a
thing during my father's lifetime. Is that the messenger's news?

Preising.—Yes, and ——

Ernest.—What else? Why do you hesitate? That is not like you.

Preising.—You will have to know it. Rumor goes very much further.

Ernest.—Rumor has a thousand tongues, and truth but one. Who can detect the one among the many? But how far? I am curious.

Preising.—There are rumors of a secret marriage. The girl would not consent to anything else.

Ernest.—And you tell me that with a serious face, *Preising?* Is that the messenger's news?

Preising.—I immediately enjoined the strictest silence upon him.

Ernest.—Not by any means. Let him talk; but let him add that all Bavaria has been settled upon a mistress. (*He laughs.*) Isn't that the truth of the matter? Even the part which we have lost shall be reconquered especially for her! I shall do it, you understand?

Preising.—Are you sure there is nothing back of all this, nothing at all?

Ernest.—Quite sure. The barber's daughter has simply started the report in order to gloss over her guilt. That is as plain as day. But that is no reason why we should look on calmly until it is known throughout the empire. I am doubly glad now that the Count of Brunswick has made reply, for it enables us to send down a cleansing shower to wash away the mud before it has time to harden. You must set out again immediately to bear this message.

Preising.—But if he should not receive it as you expect?

Ernest.—Let us not dwell on impossibilities. You may furthermore summon him to a tournament at Regensburg. My knights are to know immediately that Guelph and Wittelsbach are finally going to kiss and make up, and we shall formally announce his betrothal at the tournament. The whole plan must be carried out as expeditiously as possible. My brother must issue the summons at once. He will be glad to do so, for it is a task that he likes. Do you know how his little son is? It is a long time since I have seen him. They hide him from me as if they were ashamed to let me see him, and I hardly like to ask about him.

Preising.—I hear he is much better since the old herb-woman has been attending him.

Ernest.—I am glad to hear it, though it doesn't signify much. For all the ills of the flesh play catch with this poor child. I would never have thought there were so many as he has already suffered from in his brief life. Such a pity! *Preising*, poor little Adolf will never do anything reckless, at most, nothing worse than enter a monastery. That would be the best thing for him, after all.

Preising.— But weak children often grow to be strong men.

Ernest.— God grant it! I wish it from my heart! But how different my Albrecht was. There wasn't anything that he was not up to when he was four years old. He let no man leave the castle with an unruffled beard, and wherever he was playing, there was not a window within reach unbroken. Of course he has gone too far now. He has besmirched his record, I would never have thought it of him. Well, we will make it clean again; and afterwards I can demand so much the more from him, for all the ten commandments together cannot lash a man so madly onward, as his youthful allies peering over his shoulder every time he turns his head. That's the reason God allows them, I suppose.

Preising.— And if,— your Lordship, never was a consent in such a matter quickly given,— if he does not send back his reply at once, am I still to summon him to the tournament?

Ernest.— Then most of all, for then, before the assembled knights I shall — But — what folly! To horse and away, Preising!

(*Exit quickly.*)

SCENE II

Tower room in Vohburg Castle. ALBRECHT enters with AGNES, the CHAMBERLAIN follows.

Albrecht (to AGNES, who shrinks from entering.) What is the matter? *To the CHAMBERLAIN.* So this is the room?

Chamberlain.— This is the room.

Albrecht.— A perfect watch-tower!

Chamberlain.— Yes, here enemies as well as friends can first be seen. That is what your dear mother said the first time she entered it, and, like you, stepped over to the balcony.

Albrecht.— We should have come here immediately after our arrival, should we not, for I see you enjoyed my mother's confidence.

Chamberlain.— Oh, I need not be told why you come five days later than she expected you. I know what I shall answer now, when the steward and the butler put their heads together, for now you are here, as well as my gracious lady, Elizabeth of Würtemberg, or rather, of Bavaria, now.

Albrecht.— It is true, she is your lady; however, it is not Elizabeth of Würtemberg.

Chamberlain.— Not Elizabeth of Würtemberg? Of course I had imagined it all very different. Usually when a princess marries in the Holy

Roman Empire, one bell peals it out merrily to the other, banners wave, trumpets blare, and gay heralds dash hither and thither; but this time there was nothing of that sort. May God bless the duchess of this land and the lawful wife of my lord. (*Exit.*)

Albrecht.— What a queer old fellow! Just like a withered leaf which the wind has left hanging in the midst of green foliage.

Agnes.— Albrecht, he reminds me of my father. Some day *he* will look just like that.

Albrecht (turning quickly away).— Oh, we are really here! How that old fellow did go on! Kindly as my feelings are towards him, it almost vexed me to see him go ahead of us jingling his keys.

Agnes.— And I felt almost ashamed,—but still I was touched. He cannot tolerate a blemish in his duke; and in his eyes I am your blemish.

Albrecht.— Now, you walls, if you have tongues, speak! So that I may find out why we were to come to this room first. I thought there was surprise here, but there is nothing to be seen.

Agnes.— How beautiful it is here! What wonderful windows with all their beautiful colors!

Albrecht.— Yes, they do that work on the Rhine now, since they have begun to build the cathedral at Cologne. Each window is a picture legend. It makes one pious merely to look through them. However, I cannot believe we were summoned hither merely to look at them.

Agnes.— And oh, the view!

Albrecht.— It is all your own now, my Agnes. But do not be too glad. You have to put up with a good deal in the bargain. For example, that old gnarled tree there, and that poor dilapidated hut.

Agnes.— My Albrecht, you are so happy; that is my greatest happiness.

Albrecht.— But I am a mere sulker, compared to what I shall be tomorrow and the day after, and the day after that, and so on. Yes, Agnes: with me one delight is always the forerunner of the next greater one; and now, for the first time, I understand why man is immortal.

Agnes.— I can stand no more, or my heart will burst with joy. (*Catching sight of the prie-dieu.*) There! There! (*Falls on her knees and prays.*)

Albrecht (with a glance upward).— This is thy blessing! (*AGNES arises from the prie-dieu, where she has been kneeling, and a secret drawer springs open without her noticing it.*)

Albrecht.— Now my mother is no longer in heaven, but here on earth with us. But her bliss is undiminished.

Agnes.— Ah, Albrecht, she was not expecting *me*.

Albrecht (catching sight of the secret drawer).— But see, what is that?

Agnes.— Pearls and jewels! oh, what splendor!

Albrecht.— Her jewels! At least, I suppose so, for she probably only wore them before my birth; and here's a letter too. (*Reads.*) ‘To that one of my children who first prays here.’ (*Hands letter to AGNES.*) Then it's for you, and that is the secret. So there was an object in our coming here, after all. How splendid they would have been for your wedding day! But of course that was over before we even came here. Well? (*AGNES hands the letter back to ALBRECHT.*) (*ALBRECHT reads.*) If I had been the one, I might have adorned you with them; but now you must do it for yourself.

Agnes.— No, neither the one nor the other.

Albrecht.— And underneath there is something for the one who did not marry. Surely that will not shine and sparkle so. Good mother, you knew even then who that would be. (*To Agnes.*) But make haste to remove our things so that I can get at mine.

Agnes.— How could I touch them?

Albrecht.— Well, if you will not, you surely will not prevent me from being a dutiful son. Now then (*he picks up the pearls to put them on for her.*)

Agnes.— Oh, you must not! What would there be left for a princess?

Albrecht.— Come, let us match like with like. (*Shakes the pearls, then fastens them around her throat.*) But these are like hailstones against snow. Let us see which one is whiter.

Agnes.— Flatterer!

Albrecht.— Agnes, did any one ever tell you that when you drink red wine it gleams through the alabaster of your throat just as if it were being poured from one crystal into another? But what foolishness! (*Takes a golden diadem.*) Here is another match to be made. (*Tries to place on her head.*)

Agnes.— Oh, it would weigh me down.

Albrecht.— I can understand your making a stronger resistance than before, for here the similarity is even more doubtful. This gold and that (*points to her hair*). The contrast is too great! But you must not be too exacting when there is nothing better.

Agnes.— Then you may put it on — only to see how she must have worn it.

Albrecht.— The eye is itself a precious jewel that brooks no ornament, but this ring for the finger, this bracelet for your arm, and behold, the empress is perfect! For you did not dream that I wished to make an empress of you, did you? Now she stands before me. If you should step upon the first throne in the world, the next thousand years could produce no one who could have the right to say, ‘Arise!’ But now, I must see what

is my share. (*He removes from the drawer some faded flowers, etc.*) Withered flowers and leaves ready to crumble at a touch! What is their message? But here (*he catches sight of a skull and picks it up*) is it you, Silent Admiser? You are a better preacher than Solomon, but for me you have no message. A man who has grown up on battle fields does not need you to warn him that he must die. But first, I will live. I am sure there are many in heaven whose joy is still incomplete, because they gaze back upon the earth without knowing why. But I know why. They did not empty their hearts of earthly bliss. They never loved! Ah, Agnes — (Enter CHAMBERLAIN.) Stop, not one word, if the fate of the world depends upon it! You Agnes, if I am to end in God, I must begin with you. For me there is no other way to Him. Do not you feel that too?

Agnes. — Even if death should come this very instant, I could not say, ‘You have come too soon.’

Albrecht (*embraces her*). — All our supremest joy is one with His. What our hearts cannot contain overflows into His. He is only happy in our happiness (*kisses her*). And sometimes the overflow rolls back and engulfs us, and we are suddenly transported and find ourselves wandering in Paradise without realizing a change. If that could only happen now!

Agnes. — No more, I beg you. No more!

Albrecht. — This has been an hour! Now let the second come. (*To Chamberlain.*) What is it?

Chamberlain. — A message from your father. Chancellor Preising —

Albrecht. — Let him enter. (*AGNES is going to leave the room.*) (*Exit CHAMBERLAIN.*) No, Agnes, I do not intend to deny you. Remain! I can judge of my father’s attitude in the matter by the way in which he meets you. So we shall know immediately how things stand.

Agnes. — Oh, let me go, Albrecht! Something bids me go. The diadem would be a challenge.

Albrecht. — Then step into the adjoining room. You can be back at my side immediately. (*Exit AGNES.*) Now I am ready to be found!

(Enter CHANCELLOR PREISING, accompanied by TÖRRING, FRAUENHOVEN, and NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG.)

Albrecht. — What is your message, Chancellor?

Preising. — Good news!

Albrecht. — That would be adding joy to joy.

Preising. — Your father has demanded the hand of the fairest princess in all Saxony for you, his son.

Albrecht. — I regret it most sincerely.

Preising.— And Erick of Brunswick has given his consent.

Albrecht.— My regret is so much the deeper then.

Preising.— And I —

Albrecht.— And you are sent to make me nod my head in consent, like a Nurnberg jumping-jack. You will not succeed in doing so and that is my deepest regret, for you will be the loser.

Preising.— I can assure you it would greatly amaze your father if you should but for a moment be opposed to an alliance which never has been possible since the proscription of Henry the Lion, though often enough attempted, — one that would amicably settle an ancient and oftentimes dangerous hostility, once for all. Not to grasp this opportunity with both hands would be deliberately trampling rare fortune under foot. Not only that, it would also arouse again the slumbering feud between Guelph and Wittelsbach, and strengthen it; it would turn an unjust hatred into a justifiable scorn; it would be challenging revenge and offering the weapons to the enemy.

Albrecht.— Oh, I know all that! It would surprise me if it were otherwise. No one dares to cross my father's plans without offending half the world. It never concerns him alone. However great his skill may be in spinning his threads so fine, it is not infallible, and this time they are going to break.

Preising.— And your reason for this?

Albrecht.— You know it.

Preising.— I hope not.

Albrecht.— You need not remain in ignorance long. I am a man like any other man. I have the right to swear love and fidelity to a woman with whom I stepped before the sacred altar; therefore I have to make my own choice, like any one else.

Preising.— You are a prince. You are to rule over millions, who must labor to-day for you in the sweat of their brow, who to-morrow must spill their blood for you, and the next day must give their lives for you. Do you expect all this for nothing? That is not the way God has regulated His world. To them you also owe a sacrifice, and you will surely not be the first one of your far-famed line to refuse it.

Albrecht.— One sacrifice? One with every breath, you mean. Do you know what you are demanding? Surely you do not, or you would have to lower your eyes, and not stand there as if the ten commandments flamed in golden letters on your brow. What do you do when the day has been a gloomy one, when everything has gone wrong, and you have found even yourself unbearable? You toss aside all that has bothered you and hasten to your wife's side. You cannot look at her without remember-

ing all your happy hours together, and that memory always brings happiness. What would my life be? Could I hasten to my wife for solation? Impossible! Rather would I have to place a sentinel before my door to keep her out, so that she would not come to me of her accord and make me quite insane, for she would be my greatest curse. Still, I could not do that either. I should have to embrace and caress her even though longing to push her from me. You shudder? Do you understand now what you are demanding? Not only am I to renounce my happiness; I am even to embrace and caress my misery, and to pray for it. But, no, no, never in all eternity!

Preising.—Your ancestor Louis had a consort who was always called involuntarily by another name than the one she had received in sacrament of baptism. She was Margaret of Karnten, who to this day among the people is known as Margaret of the Large Mouth. He was young, like you, and it was never said that he was blind. However, by marrying her he brought back into possession of Bavaria the baronetcy of Tyrol, and even though he could not take pleasure in her beauty, he must have consoled himself with the thought that his subjects during his reign could get their salt for half the former tax, and give him their blessing morning, noon, and night with joyful faces.

Albrecht.—Do you happen to know whether he refused them a requiem every time he looked upon his wife?

Preising.—I only know that he left four heirs to the throne. Your lordship, I have delivered my message, and shall announce to your father that you have not given your consent. If you would add anything you can do so when you see him. But there is one thing more. I am also to summon you to a tournament which your father has proclaimed at Regensburg, and you surely will not wish to increase his displeasure by staying away.

Albrecht.—Of course not. I have not forgotten how to tilt, not even in Augsburg, and it will give me pleasure to prove it.

Preising.—Then you will have to leave this very day.

Albrecht.—To-day?

Preising.—The tournament occurs day after to-morrow.

Albrecht.—That is quicker work than a peasant's brawl. What is it for? Has a daughter been born to the Emperor in his old age?

Preising.—Your father, the duke, probably intended to announce your betrothal to his knights, for never dreaming your refusal possible, he is feeling very proud of having accomplished what his ancestors failed in for three whole centuries. But now, there will probably be nothing but a crossing of lances.

Albrecht.— Notwithstanding, I consider myself his obedient son in all reasonable things, and will enter the lists for a peapod, if he desires it.

Preising.— You have given me your word that you will be present.

(Exit PREISING with TÖRRING, FRAUENHOVEN, and VON WERNBERG.)

Albrecht (alone).— That is over. I can hardly say that I am sorry. It is not intended that I shall enjoy my happiness like a boy munching the cherries he has stolen. Now, if the storm blows off the magic cap, the priest in Augsburg surely cannot complain of my having betrayed the secret.

(Enter AGNES, without the jewels.)

Agnes.— Now, my Albrecht?

Albrecht.— Yes, Agnes, I shall now see if you have learned anything from your father. Just to try you, I am going to bring back a few bruises from Regensburg. But what have you been doing? Undoing all my handiwork? Oh, no, you simply mean you have restored God's. And it is true. I had only destroyed it. Like a boy tossing carnation petals at a lily! You were right to shake off these gaudy superfluities.

Agnes.— I heard everything, everything! I could not help it.

Albrecht.— Everything, except my last answer. Do not fear. (Embraces her.) We are united. Only death can part us, and he is his own master.

Agnes.— It is not fear that excites me, but—You see, my Albrecht, it does hurt to have to think that all Augsburg does not know I am your wife, and the consolation of being pure before God does not always suffice, nor, I must confess, the feeling of paying for my happiness thus. But I will willingly bear it, however hard, my whole life long, if you and your father only remain on friendly terms.

Albrecht.— There is no cause for worry this time. Even a prince's son may say, ‘I do not want her, at any rate, I do not want her yet!’ Oh, but I shall beat them down in the jousts. Whoever considered me a good lance before will be ashamed of ever having thought so. And I will make every one vow to himself that he will never cross my path again,— even those who get no scratches. (Exit both.)

SCENE III

Regensburg: the tilting place. The spectators are already assembled. The MARSHAL stands at the lists, with a book under his arm. A long procession; banners, torches, trumpets. DUKE ERNEST enters, accompanied by his

knights. Among these are, HANS VON LAUBELFING, WOLFRAM VON PIENZAU, OTTO VON BERN, IGNACE VON SEYBOLTS DORF, and HANS VON PREISING. The knights, with exception of PREISING, take their places in line, at the right of the MARSHAL.

Preising (walking at ERNEST's side).—Your Lordship, do not misinterpret my making another appeal to you. But this hour is decisive. It may be impossible ever to undo what you are about to do now; and usually you do not treat my humble advice with scorn.

Ernest.—I can protect you from every one but my successor. Therefore I can now only heed my own counsel.

Marshal (calling).—Wolfram von Pienzenau, Otto von Bern.

Wolfram and Otto.—Here! (MARSHAL admits them to lists.)

Preising.—I beg you to give the matter a little more consideration, and not to take his hasty reply for the defiance of a son,—but rather, the obstinacy of a lover who cannot so easily transfer his affections from an Agnes to an Anna. (Walks over to the knights.)

Ernest (to himself).—A gash is sometimes necessary. If it does not work immediately it does later. Well, well! Who would have ever dreamed it possible? And all for the sake of a courtesan!

(Enter ALBRECHT with NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG and TÖRRING.)

Ernest (as he passes ALBRECHT).—Once more I ask you, am I to announce to my assembled knights your betrothal to Anna of Brunswick?

Albrecht.—Father, there is too much of you in me, that I should give two different answers to one and the same question on one and the same morning. God above! Was it all for nothing that I prostrated myself before you like the humblest suppliant?

Ernest.—Very well. (Walks on.) Marshal, I have nothing to say. (Ascends the platform.) Go on!

Marshal (calling names).—Ignace von Seyboldsdorf! (VON SEYBOLTS DORF moves forward to the lists.)

Albrecht.—Seyboldsdorf! Back! Wittelsbach is here, and comes first!

Marshal.—Halt!

Albrecht.—Marshal von Pappenheim! Take heed! When I have to open a blind man's eyes I make use of my lance.

Ernest.—Article ten!

Marshal (opens the book and reads).—‘Further it was decreed at Heilbronn for all time, he who is born and descended from nobility and seduces woman —’

Albrecht (knocking the book from his hand).—Is not allowed to enter the

tournament. Are there vagabonds here who do not know that without having it read to them?

Marshal.— You are accused of living in dishonor with a Suabian maid at your Castle at Vohburg.

Albrecht.— My accuser!

(DUKE ERNEST arises.)

Albrecht.— Duke of Munich-Bavaria, have your spies beaten for reviling your own people. The honorable and virtuous daughter of Augsburg, Agnes Bernauer, is my wife. Here are my witnesses.

Ernest (aside).— Preising, that is enough to — make one grow young again.

Albrecht.— Since one cannot live in dishonor with his own wife,— Page, just show the Marshal how to let down the barriers! (PAGE quickly opens for him, and ALBRECHT enters.) Well, gentlemen, it is customary to extend good wishes to your adversary.

Ernest (grasps his sword and is about to descend).— I shall wish you good luck.

Preising (blocks his way).— Your Highness, you will have to stab me first if you do.

Ernest.— Oh, I only intended to give him a beating as a reward for his impudence; but you are quite right. 'Tis better so. Why need I permit my wrath to be aroused, when my authority as reigning duke suffices? (Calls out in clear tones.) Noblemen of Bavaria, Counts, Barons, and Knights,— as you know, William, my brother, also has a son!

Albrecht (aside).— What does this mean?

Ernest.— My sincere respects to the virtuous maiden who can only be gained with the sanction of the church. She must indeed be a shrewd person. But the one who wins her thus has to take into the bargain the blessing and mercy of all the heavenly host. However, his crown and ducal robes must be left on the altar steps. My brother's son, by the name of Adolph, I hereby declare — my successor!

Albrecht.— By the memory of my mother, it cannot be!

Laubelfing.— Albrecht von Wittelsbach, Ingolstadt stands by you! Do not fear for your rights, Louis of Ingolstadt will help you to protect them.

Ernest.— Louis of Ingolstadt, or whoever may be his spokesman, the whole empire will stand by me, with all its ban and banishment. Woe unto him who disturbs the peace of the empire.

Marshal (together with many other knights, all clashing their swords).— Ay, woe be to him!

Ernest.— Citizen of Augsburg, barber's son in law, accept now your blessing and wedding gift at one and the same time! Long live my successor! (*Descends from the tribune.*) Let all good Bavarians hail him with me! Long live Adolph the child!

Marshal (with many knights, gathering around DUKE ERNEST).— Long live Adolph the child!

Albrecht (surrounded by his followers).— Otto, my grandfather, be our protector!

Ernest.— The tournament is ended.

Albrecht.— No, it is only beginning. If the noblemen are deserting me, then citizens and peasants will stand by me. (*Waves his sword toward the audience.*)

(*Great commotion prevails.*)

ACT IV

SCENE I

Munich. Two and a half years later. The Ducal Cabinet. CHAN-CELLOR PREISING, seated at a table, holding a sealed document in his hand.

Preising.— This I am to open and examine? And of all days, on this day of sorrows? (*Turns over the document.*) Not even an address! Nothing but a cross! But, seven times sealed by his own hand; besides, it was lying in a copper casket with a triple lock. Its content must be very serious indeed. This dust on my fingers proves that it cannot be of very recent date (*breaking the seal*); it is plainly a secret which he has long kept from me. My courage almost fails me. (*Enter STACHUS.*) Have you heard any news of Prince Adolph? Not even a little better? With God there is nothing impossible, you know.

Stachus.— Better? But half an hour ago the last sacrament was administered to him. Sir, the Witch of Augsburg is on the alert, and the devil will not desert her. How should the poor child be able to recover?

Preising.— What nonsense you are talking again, Stachus.

Stachus.— It is just what every one else is saying; in castle and cloister, market and street, wherever you go, everybody, everybody! A reverend Franciscan father has pronounced a curse upon this Bernauer girl, saying she deserves to be burned at the stake; so it must be true. And why should it not be true, pray tell? First the father died, good, noble Duke William

(he gave me this doublet), then, before the time for mourning his loss was over, his fair wife followed him, and now the Prince, their son, dear little Adolph, the Crown Prince, lies at death's door. (*The chapel bell tolls.*) There, do you hear? It is tolling. The end has come. (*Clenching his hands as if with a curse.*) How can I help it? (*Falls on his knees and prays.*) (*PREISING kneels also.*) With my own hands I would light the fire to destroy her. She would find as many executioners as there are good Bavarians. The next victim will be the Duke, our reigning lord, mark my words!

Preising (who has risen with STACHUS).— Yes, the end has come. The child has drawn his last breath, and Duke Ernest is now without an heir, since he has cast off his own son. A heavy hour for this land! May God be merciful unto us. (*Picks up the document.*) He will probably be here soon now. He was over there the entire night. (*Draws the document from the cover and unfolds it.*) What is this? (*Reads.*) ‘Legal proof from the imperial authorities, that on account of criminally misleading young Duke Albrecht into unlawful marriage, or indeed, if nothing else can be proven, simply on account of being a party to such a marriage, Agnes Bernauer may be put to death, as a precaution against grievous calamity.’ (*Stops reading.*) Oh, now I understand everything. This prince in dying will cause another death, this dead child will drag a victim after him! Horrible! (*Looks at the document again.*) ‘The young Duke!’ He is five years older than she, and probably had won his first battle before she had laid aside her dolls. Poor girl, what a fate is about to befall you! (*Turns over the pages.*) Who are the signers of the document? Adlzreiter, Kraitmayr, Emeran zu Kalmpeng! All famous jurists, worthy to sit at Justinian’s feet and rule the world! Who would dare to defy them? She is lost! This must have been drawn up just after the tournament at Regensburg. I remember they all met here in Munich, I thought, by chance, but now I see they were summoned. That was two years and a half ago. How little she must be expecting this now! (*Continues to turn the pages.*) And below stands the formal death sentence, lacking nothing but the Duke’s signature. That he will doubtless affix shortly. The thought of it makes me shudder! Many such documents have passed through my hands, but the stern sentence was always prefaced by a long list of atrocious crimes; murders, robberies, criminal violations of the law,— which deserved severe punishment. But what is the offence in this case? The worst one could plead against her is, she did not enter a cloister. (*Reads again.*) ‘By the executioner’s axe or by drowning!’ And is there no other way? No possible way of saving her?

(Enter DUKE ERNEST.)

Duke Ernest.— I have kept you waiting, Preising! But you see I have been kept waiting myself.

Preising.— My Lord!

Ernest.— Enough! Enough! One soul more has joined the countless throng. Have you read the document?

Preising.— I had but broken the seal, your lordship, when the bell began to toll.

Ernest.— Pray finish it at once. (Turns away.) I am quite undone To think the child would die so hard! A life so brief, and a death struggle lasting twelve hours! Father in heaven! But now, it is over.

(The great cathedral bell begins to toll.)

Ernest (paces back and forth).— The great bell at last! That is what I have been waiting for. Now the city will know the sad news too! From place to place, from house to house, from mouth to mouth! Prayers! prayers! We need them all. (Turning to PREISING.) Well?

Preising (lays the document on the table).— Is there anything for me to say?

Ernest.— Whatever you are able to! Test it point for point, I'll answer you now as always. Have you any objections to the men who pronounced the sentence?

Preising.— To such renowned judges? If the code of laws had not already been established, to these I would entrust the commission, if I were the emperor!

Ernest.— Are they open to bribery? Is there one among them who can be suspected of venality?

Preising.— Most surely, no! But even so, Duke Ernest would never tempt any man by bribery.

Ernest.— You give me only my just dues there, Preising. Well, such men, of the most scrupulous honesty after a careful conscientious investigation of the case, submitted this document to me two years and a half ago! From that time to this it has never seen the light of day. Could I be accused of unseemly haste?

Preising.— Not even by an enemy, my lord!

Ernest.— If I put this sentence into execution, now, can it be asserted, that it is not the Duke who is doing his duty but the knight who wishes to remove a blemish from the family escutcheon, or a father who will be avenged?

Preising.—No, not that, my lord!

Ernest (picking up the pen).—Then —

Preising.—Your lordship, one moment!

Ernest (drops the pen).—Well? I am not a tyrant, nor do I desire to become one! But it shall never be said of me, I wore my sword simply as an ornament. What have you to say?

Preising.—The sentence I cannot refute! You are right. There is but one inevitable result when the rights of succession are in dispute; sooner or later it means civil war with all its horrors, and no one can foretell what the outcome may be.

Ernest.—This inevitable result is now impending, whether there should be born an heir to Albrecht or not! In the one case, the right of succession would have to be established, in the other there would be no possibility of agreement between the rival factions of Ingolstadt and Landeshut, for both would claim the lion's share. Indeed, I doubt if they would wait until the succeeding reign! Even now they are trying to arouse my wrath by courting my son's favor!

Preising.—But it is horrible that she must die just because she is beautiful and virtuous!

Ernest.—Alas! too true! Therefore I placed it in God's hands. Now he has spoken. I even went so far as to cast off my own son, and put my nephew in his place. This nephew's death was God's answer.

Preising.—And is there no other way? None at all?

Ernest.—Your appeal strikes me to the heart! You think I might do even more?

Preising.—Have her abducted,—let her disappear! That will be quite easily accomplished, now, for he does not deem it necessary to keep her so closely guarded as heretofore.

Ernest.—What would be gained by such a step? He would never give up searching for her to his dying day!

Preising.—Have the report circulated that she is dead; he found a priest to marry them, do you think it would be difficult to find one who would issue a death certificate for you?

Ernest.—And I should bestow upon him a second wife, with his first one still living? Preising, I hold the sacrament sacred and my son shall never be able to testify against me on the day of wrath: 'Lord, of this I am innocent, for it was done without my knowledge.' The cloister is of no avail here. There is nothing but death!

Preising.—But there is the pope, and if he refuses, the emperor!

Frederick Barbarossa divorced himself; why not Louis of Bavaria divorce his son?

Ernest.— How divorce, when neither party desires it? Preising, I have had two years and a half to weigh this matter, and I have found no other solution. (*Picks up the pen.*) No, it is God's will, thus, and no other way! Now is the time to put it into execution, for Albrecht will be setting out either to-day or to-morrow for the tournament at Ingolstadt. One might almost say, he is to be restored to his full honor there, for Louis of Ingolstadt has summoned thither all of my enemies, thinking that the wider the gulf between father and son, the better his own chances. Well, while they are waving their standards about him, I'll see to it that they need not be ashamed of so doing, afterwards! Nothing vexed me so sorely as the splendid pageant at the time he took her from Vohburg to Straubing, attended by all the magnificence belonging to a duchess. But now it is my turn. Emeran zu Kalmpurg is the judge of Straubing and Pappenheim can be there with a hundred soldiers inside of twenty-four hours!

Preising.— And afterwards? Gracious sir, you were right. I made a poor prophecy at Regensburg. Do you think he will submit to such a thing? In his rage may not he threaten his own life, or rise in open rebellion against you?

Ernest.— The first, possibly, the second, certainly. I am simply doing what I must,—the issue is with God. For her it is unfortunate, and for me it is surely no joy; but, in the name of the widows and orphans whom civil war would victimise, in the name of the cities which it would lay in ashes, of the villages it would destroy,—Agnes Bernauer, go to thy doom! (*He affixes his signature, then turns and leaves the room.* PREISING follows with the document.)

SCENE II

Straubing: The court of the castle and an adjoining garden. TÖRRING, FRAUENHOVEN, NOTHAFT VON WERNBERG, in full armor, sitting at a stone table drinking. The CHAMBERLAIN passes.

Wernberg.— Well, my good man,—on your way to the chapel? (*Lifts his goblet.*) Come and have a drink, so that you will be convinced that the prayers of the pious are not in vain!

Chamberlain.— The knight said to the wine cup — I am going to overturn you — and did so seven times in succession; but finally the wine cup

overturns him, and right into the devil's arms, who was standing behind. Take heed,— nor be unduly scornful! (*Exit.*)

Frauenhoven.— Where is the Duke? The horses are growing restless.

Törring.— He is inspecting the mausoleum, which she has had built for herself and which was to be finished either yesterday or to-day. I saw them walking over together.

Wernberg.— What a queer idea for a young woman! A mausoleum!

Törring.— To begin with, it was not so strange. She probably felt uneasy enough just after the marriage, and with reason. Of course matters stand differently now. And yet, who can tell what may happen? The sickly child-successor in Munich has not been strengthened by the weight of the crown — which the old duke bestowed upon him. Indeed, he may have put it upon the child's head merely because he expected it to roll off again.

Wernberg.— There they come. Let us mount, so that we do not delay the start. But first (*lifts his glass*) —

Törring.— Here's to good luck! (*Clinking glasses and draining them.*) (*Exit.*)

(*ALBRECHT, in armor, enters with AGNES. A bell rings.*)

Agnes.— So you'll bring me the swinging lamp I want? A bronze one, with a long chain, that will hang from the ceiling in the chapel?

Albrecht.— I would rather bring something else, I admit, but I have promised, so you shall have it.

Agnes.— Are you angry?

Albrecht.— How could I be angry? But I am worried because you are so absorbed in this erection of your mausoleum. Is it because you are disturbed by forebodings of misfortune? I cannot see why you should be,— but there must be something!

Agnes.— There is nothing at all, my Albrecht; you simply do not understand. We girls of the common people always make our shrouds as soon as we have finished our wedding gowns, and with reason, too, for we would never be sure of having one otherwise. You see, I belong to that class, and I have not yet been the wife of a duke long enough to be completely transformed. But I have lost some of my humility, for instead of pricking my fingers over my shroud, as my former playmates must do, I am making mason and carpenter do my work for me, by building me a mausoleum. Now that it is finished, I am happy to know the place where I shall sleep my last long sleep, and to be able to say my prayers there now.

Albrecht.— If only that is all!

Agnes.— But what else could it be? I am simply getting my bed ready,

while it is still day! Nothing more! Perhaps you imagine I still feel a little of that fear and anxiety that oppressed me on coming here to Straubing with you after the tournament at Regensburg. Then, I did tremble for both of us! At that time I was not yet accustomed to my castle at Vohburg, and was still running from apartment to apartment, in a vain effort to find one small enough for my comfort. And then the change from my little castle of Vohburg to this magnificent palace was just as great as the difference between my father's humble house and the castle of Vohburg! Oh, how well I remember all the music on the way,—the cheers of the peasants, following us with their scythes and ploughshares,—the flowers they scattered in front of us,—everything struck terror to my heart. Even you seemed almost a stranger, because you permitted it, nay, even gloried in it! I was almost frightened to death when you wanted to have the bells rung at our arrival here! But now, my Albrecht, all that feeling has long since vanished. You just heard me call Vohburg small; I no longer am amazed when the suppliants crowd around me in the morning,—and I can make inquiries like a born duchess,—I can shake my head, and almost refuse.

Albrecht.—That is the way I like you!

Agnes.—But in my dreams, everything is so different, else I might grow too proud. When I am asleep, visions of the old days return — and again I have to sweep up all the crumbs from the floor,—oh, so carefully! Just last night (your generous heart will smile at this), in a dream, I blushed and stammered when I asked my father for a trifle, and he replied, as was his wont — ‘Very well,—you may have it,—but then I must do without my wine for half a year!’ I was still very angry at him when I awoke. But then,—I at least saw him again, if only in a dream!

Albrecht.—You are going to see him (*stops abruptly*) —There! I have spoiled a surprise for you.

Agnes.—No, my Albrecht,—I know what you are planning,—but it is useless. If he had ever intended to come, he would have come long ago. I can understand what keeps him from coming — and I must respect him for it.

Albrecht.—I think he is going to yield, this time! If he does not, we'll go to the carnival in Munich!

(Enter TÖRRING.)

Törring.—Pray pardon me for intruding, your Grace!

Albrecht.—I am tarrying too long for you?

Törring.—If you intend to go at all —

Albrecht.—If I intend to go at all? I most surely do not intend to

disappoint all the knights that Duke Louis has assembled with such difficulty.

Törring.—Do you not hear the cathedral bell?

Albrecht.—It has been ringing for some time, but what of that? It does not concern me.

Törring.—More than you dream! Your cousin Adolph is dead!

Albrecht.—Adolph!

Törring.—The news of his death has just been brought from Munich!

Albrecht.—Peace to him! His life was never anything but a burden to himself, and surely not a pleasure to any one else.

Agnes.—God in Heaven! The third of the family to die within six months!

Törring.—You, my lady, understand!

Agnes.—Do they say that I am to blame this time, too? Oh, of course! Who else? Who else?

Albrecht.—God knows, I am not glad to hear this news. Why should I be? As far as I am concerned, he never existed. But I can shed no tears for him. There is only one thing I am thinking of! How will my father ever be able to retract with honor?

Törring.—Your Grace, shall I have the horses unsaddled?

Albrecht.—What an idea! Of course—I am not eager to have the tournament continue—but I surely should be the last one to be absent. I must go at once,—but I shall be back much sooner than I anticipated. My love, my life,—farewell! (*Embraces AGNES, then moves away a few steps.*) You see, Törring,—one can part from his life, and still not need to die immediately! So you must not stay single! (*He goes back to kiss her again.*) And now, I am to be in Ingolstadt and you in Straubing, here! (*Exit. TÖRRING follows.*)

Agnes (hurries into the garden).—Here I can see him mount! Oh, the wall is too high! But I must be able to hear him! (*Hurries back again.*) Silence! Trumpeter,—else I cannot hear him! Hark! That is his voice. ‘You are good and kind, Törring.’ Why should he be telling him that now? Now they are setting out. Farewell, my—But wait! They are stopping! Can anything have happened? Some one is talking, low and indistinct. There, that is his voice again! ‘Take him to her!’ To me! Who can it be? ‘It will make her very happy.’ *Make me happy!* Ah! my Albrecht, you do not know me, after all! I wish the night would fall this very minute, and that the day would not return for three times twenty-four hours! Or could it be my father? My father! Oh, surely not! But now, they are riding on. Fly on your way, swift-footed steeds! Just so much more

quickly will you bring him back to me! (*She stands in a listening attitude. I can hear no sound now.* (*Listens again.*) Yes—I can! (*Thoughtlessly picks a flower, then drops it again.*) I am sorry I picked the pretty blossom—it is no time to wear flowers. (*Walks slowly along.*) And now things have turned out just as they prophesied! He is dead! Can that possibly signify a change for the better for Albrecht and me? What am I to do now? Put on mourning? If I do—they will again accuse me of being proud,—and of considering myself one of the family; the criticising that dreadful, steel-eyed judge is said to have pronounced upon me. If I continue to wear colors, then it will be said that I am glorying in his death. I shall simply follow the dictates of my heart, which tells me to mourn with the mourners. (*Enter COUNT TÖRRING.*) What! Are you still here?

Törring.—I am to stay here, my lady. Some one has just arrived from Augsburg. Do you wish to see him?

Agnes.—From Augsburg? (*Exit TÖRRING.* THEOBALD enters immediately.) Theobald!

Theobald.—Agnes! Your ladyship, I mean,—That is the way I must address you, is it not?

Agnes.—Never mind that now! Tell me—is my father coming too? But why ask such a question? Of course you could not both leave at once?

Theobald.—Well,—that might be possible now—but you know him. He thinks you ought to forget your old father and stop sending messages to him; it will do no good, anyway, for he knows his place and does not intend to remind people here of the old barber,—your father! He is sincerely glad that you do not forget him,—that your lord is not ashamed of him,—but he understands the ways of the world better than you, and wishes to be left in peace.

Agnes.—And that is the only message you have for me from him? You have taken this long journey only to tell me that!

Theobald.—Oh! that was not the only reason!

Agnes.—Perhaps there is a secret one,—that I am not to know?

Theobald.—No reason on earth why you should not know it. We have heard many conflicting reports about you, during these years since you left us, and I was overcome by the desire—I felt I had to see—

Agnes.—Whether I was really happy or not? Oh, if you only had come an hour sooner! Then you might have seen it with your own eyes! But no, it is better as it is! And you, Theobald? And Augsburg? Tell me everything! Everything!

Theobald.—As far as your father is concerned, you need not be worried

Just after you went away he built the new laboratory-furnace, which he never could afford before, and it has made money for him.

Agnes.— Thank Heaven!

Theobald.— He has made more chemical discoveries than he dares to make known, for fear he might fall into ill-repute as a magician. Marvels—I tell you,— perfect wonders! Too bad you cannot see them! They will have to perish with him. Some of them, however, he does not have to conceal, and besides, he is successful enough. He is quite able to buy a little garden now; do you remember how you always longed for one?

Agnes.— And what about yourself, Theobald?

Theobald.— Oh, my wages have been doubled!

Agnes.— Really?

Theobald.— Yes, indeed,— and sometimes I have to laugh at myself! For instance, just now, when I met the duke, your lord, riding away on horseback. What a man he is! One can judge how much he loves you by the way he kept his people waiting for him. That is not at all the usual way; I passed them fully an hour ago, and they were growing very impatient with the delay.

Agnes.— That is quite impossible, for they all set out together with him.

Theobald.— Yes, I know, ten or twelve of them. But I mean the others.

Agnes.— What others? He was only going to the tournament at Ingolstadt, and no one else was to accompany him.

Theobald.— Nevertheless, an hour ago, as I passed the pine-covered hill, I saw a hundred and fifty or two hundred armed men waiting there, one foot in the stirrup, lance in hand, and eagerly gazing towards Straubing as if waiting for their leader, or expecting some signal.

Agnes.— I am terrified! Where did you say it was?

Theobald.— Back there, on the Munich road.

Agnes.— On the Munich road? But Albrecht is going in the opposite direction — to Ingolstadt.

Theobald.— Somewhat farther on, a knight in full armor dashed past me — coming from the castle. I thought he was to announce his lord's approach! It just occurs to me that he wore a mask.

Agnes.— That looks most suspicious! Törring must know of this at once. God above! Do you hear that? A terrific blast from the gates! Trumpet calls on all sides,— close at hand,— coming nearer,— nearer! That portends nothing good — that comes from Duke Ernest!

Theobald.— Nothing good? Shouts! Clashing weapons! Is that for you? There is no doubt of it,— they are storming the castle,— they are already inside!

Agnes.— It cannot be! The castle is surrounded by walls and moats
 (CHAMBERLAIN rushes in.)

Chamberlain.— My lady! Follow me to the mausoleum! I am sent
 by Count Törring.

Agnes.— I depend upon his protection!

Chamberlain.— Some traitor let down the drawbridge, or else did
 not pull it up again! The enemy is entering — no one can hold them
 back!

Agnes.— At least they are not murderers,— and as for me, what
 am I?

(*The tumult approaches.*)

Chamberlain.— I implore you to follow me! Perhaps they will not
 think of looking for you there!

Agnes.— Theobald, you go with him.

Theobald.— You mean, to find me a weapon? This tree will provide
 me the nearest one. (*Tears off a branch.*)

(Enter TÖRRING and PAPPENHEIM, fighting; in the background soldier
 are fighting. PREISING too comes into view, but without his sword drawn.)

Pappenheim.— Surrender, Törring!

Törring.— Wretch!

Pappenheim.— Then take that! I have spared you long enough!

Törring.— Bah!

Pappenheim.— Wasn't that a good thrust!

Törring.— Ah! (*Strikes, but falls on his knees.*) There! My lady
 You see — how can I help you now?

Pappenheim (bending over him).— You made me do it!

Törring (falls).— The sign of the cross over me, I beseech you — friend
 or — (*dies*).

Theobald (casts aside his stick, and bends over the lifeless TÖRRING
 taking his sword from him).— Here I fall heir to something!

Agnes.— Theobald!

Theobald.— I know it is presumption on my part,— but I cannot help
 it.

Pappenheim (turning).— Where is the witch, who caused me to spill
 this noble blood?

Agnes (steps toward PAPPENHEIM).— Whom do you seek?

Pappenheim (involuntarily lowers his sword, and puts his hand to his
 helmet,— but then beats his brow).— The devil! What am I doing?

Theobald.— Serfs,— gather around your mistress to defend her! Surely every one of you owes her some gratitude!

(*The servants surround AGNES.*)

Pappenheim (*to his followers*).— Seize her! She is the one.

Theobald (*steps in front of Agnes*).— Not as long as I live!

(*The soldiers start toward AGNES, but hesitate, as if dazzled by her beauty.*)

Soldiers.— Oh! Her?

Pappenheim.— Well, why do you stare so? Has she cast her spell over you too, as she did over the poor duke? Are you going to wait until you are completely under her charm? Just give her time, and gaze into her dangerous eyes, and she will turn your hairs into bristles and your nails into claws! I thought you were familiar enough with her maddening witchery! Are you going to force me to do the bailiff's duty myself? (*Approaches AGNES.*) (*THEOBALD swings his sword in a circle about his head, making approach impossible.*) I shall have to (*strikes at THEOBALD*).

Agnes (*Throws herself between them*).— Spare him! He is only thinking of my poor old father! I will follow you! But I beg you to remember it is Duke Albrecht's wife whom you are attacking in his own castle!

Pappenheim (*attacking THEOBALD again*).— That fellow!

Preising (*quickly approaching*).— In the name of my lord, Duke Ernest, every sword in its scabbard!

Pappenheim (*sheathing his sword*).— I am willing. My orders were only to capture her!

Agnes.— Theobald, do not return to Augsburg yet, for this is not the end. (*Passes on.*)

(*PAPPENHEIM follows with his soldiers.*)

Theobald (*is about to follow, but stops suddenly*).— No! I shall go to Ingolstadt to Duke Albrecht! The first horse I find is mine! (*Rushes out.*)

Preising.— God grant she will listen to me, for then I may save her from death, even yet!

ACT V

SCENE I

Straubing. A prison.

Agnes (*alone*).— 'Ingolstadt is far away!' he said. Those dreadful words could drive me wild! It is not twenty-four hours to Ingolstadt,—

and yet when Theobald rushed past and the marshal was going to stop him they looked at me and said,—‘Let him go, wherever he will,—Ingolstadt is far away.’ Does it mean that I have not even twenty-four hours left to live? God in heaven, desert me not in this hour of need!

(Enter Preising with the death sentence)

(Goes to meet Preising).—What do you bring?

Preising.—What you yourself desired.

Agnes.—What I desired? Pray do not mock me! You are not going to throw open the gloomy gates, so closely barred, to hold me?

Preising.—Most willingly will I do so, if you will submit to the condition.

Agnes.—What is the condition?

Preising.—I stand before you in the place of the Duke of Bavaria. (AGNES shrinks back.) But I will be honest with you, and tell you that my noble lord is not your enemy.

Agnes.—Not my enemy? Why am I here then?

Preising.—You know the state of affairs. Duke Ernest is an old man now—and if God should summon him, his throne would be left vacant, unless his only son and heir were ready to fill his place. To that exalted position Albrecht will never be able to lift you,—and since he refuses to leave you,—it is your duty to leave him.

Agnes.—I — him! Rather perish!

Preising.—There is no escape for you! Believe me,—believe a man who knows your fate as well as God himself, and one who would like to save you! Therefore I come to you here in your prison,—when you stand at the very threshold of death, because I am your one and only helper. But again I repeat,—you must give him up!

Agnes.—Never,—not in all eternity!

Preising.—Not too hasty,—I implore you! I know it would be a terrible sacrifice, but if you refuse,—you will be — Can you have any doubt of your impending fate, after all that has happened to-day? You yourself will be the victim!

Agnes.—You want to frighten me,—but you will not succeed! (Leans against the table for support.) I am not in a robber's den,—and Duke Ernest must be as just as he is severe! (Sits down.) Do not look at me like that! I only felt faint for a moment,—I fancied I saw poor Törring again, lying dead before me. Now I am myself again. (Rises.) What could befall me? Until the judge has pronounced the final sentence,—even a criminal is as safe in his prison-cell as though God's angels guarded

him; and as yet I have not even had a glimpse of my judge. No,— I could not believe it of my husband's father,— after all the son has told me of him! Oh, it is impossible, quite impossible, I know,— but even if death awaits me on the threshold this very minute, I could not decide differently!

Preising.— Death stands even now at your door,— and as soon as I leave he will enter,— indeed, if I tarry too long, he will knock. Look out through the bars at the bridge — across the Danube! What do you see?

Agnes.— A great crowd of people,— some lift their arms to the sky as if in supplication, others peer over into the water. Can some one have fallen into the stream?

Preising (looking at her significantly).— Not yet!

Agnes.— Merciful God! Do you mean —? (PREISING nods.) And for what crime?

Preising (holding up the death sentence).— You have disturbed the law and order of the state, have come between father and son, have separated the Prince from his people, and have brought about a condition of affairs which is not concerned with guilt or innocence,— but simply with cause and effect. Thus have your judges decreed! If there were a gem more precious than all those that gleam in royal coronets, or still sleep in mountain depths, and on account of its wondrous beauty it aroused the wildest passions, and incited both the good and the wicked to murder and to theft,— should not this jewel be seized by the only one still undazzled, and be hurled by a strong hand into the depths of the sea,— in order to avert universal destruction? Yours is a parallel case! Once more consider,— I implore you, for the last time!

Agnes.— But do you not see that you are asking something worse than death of me? I will not give up my husband,— I cannot,— I dare not! Am I the same Agnes Bernauer as of old? Have I done nothing but receive? Have I given nothing? Are he and I not one, indissolubly one — through mutual giving and receiving, like body and soul? I can answer for him, that he will most willingly renounce all claims to the throne! Do not fear I am giving a promise he will not keep! From his own lips I have it,— like a talisman in time of greatest danger! I never thought I should be forced to make use of it, but this hour makes it imperative. Use it as you will.

Preising.— Even that has no power to save you now! Duke Albrecht can as little cast off his inherited rank as he can bestow it upon you! To him it is as inseparably linked, as to you — the beauty which enchains him. If he cannot call it a blessing, he must call it a curse,— but he belongs to his people and must ascend his throne,— and you must go to your doom! Your one means of escape is to declare your marriage to him illegal and take the veil at once!

Agnes.— How gentle Duke Ernest is! *He* only wants my life. But you ask for even more than that. Do you think I would have to do more than take that terrible step to wipe out all memory of me from my husband's soul forever — and that he would afterwards blush at remembering having loved me at all? My Albrecht,— your Agnes deny you Never! O God! At this moment how rich am I in my poverty, how strong in my powerlessness! At least I can spare him *one* sorrow. No reigning duke can drive me to it by his commands! Now, Chancellor, I am ready; you may be sure you will not see me tremble with weak fears again!

Preising.— And this is your final word?

(*The door opens, revealing the executioner and troops beyond. JUDGE EMERAN stands on the threshold.*)

Agnes (*moving forward*).— Sir Emeran,— if my husband had ever heard what I know of you,— you would never have lived to betray me. Wholly without cause he hates you worse than any one else in the whole world; I might have given him a reason for doing so if I had wished. Remembering this, your breast should be stirred by some feeling of compassion if you are human. (*EMERAN is silent.*) Sir Emeran, did I fall into your hands by fair means or foul? Think what an end you are sending me to without so much as a moment's warning. Grant me but a brief respite and God himself shall forgive you for adding one Judas more to the records of the ages; I myself will pray for you! (*EMERAN still silent.*) Sir Emeran, as I stand now before you, imploring a moment's delay,— even so will you stand before your God, and as you now give answer, so shall you then be answered. Give me but one minute of every year you are robbing me of,— only one minute! I simply wish for time to be at peace with myself before going to my doom!

Preising.— You are asking of him what he has no power to grant. He found out from your maid that you went to confession last night, and the hour is pressing. Believe me, for you one is quite as black as the other,— Do consent to my proposition!

Agnes.— Get thee behind me, Satan! (*EMERAN motions to the bailiff who enters and approaches AGNES.*) Back, fellow! You would lay hands upon me, whom no one but your duke has ever dared to touch! (*She walks toward the door.*) O my poor Albrecht! How you will have to suffer!

Preising.— Yes,— you would rather thrust this thorn into his soul,— than — It is not too late yet!

Agnes.— You may ask him, after I am gone,— if he would have preferred to curse an unworthy wife than mourn for a murdered one! I know

his answer. No, you will never bring your victim to the point of dishonoring herself. My first breath of life was pure,— my last one shall be no less pure. Do what you may and must,— I will bear it. I shall soon know whether it was right or not! (*Walks out between the lines of guards, PREISING and EMERAN following.*)

SCENE II

An open field not far from Straubing. Scattered peasants' huts — one close by. DUKE ERNEST, with his knights and troopers.

WOLFRAM VON PIENZENAU, IGNAZ VON SEYBOLDTSDORF, OTTO VON BERN.

Ernest (stepping forward with the three).— You, Pienzenau, ride on to Haydeck's assistance; he is to advance as far as he can. I have to remain here to wait for the Chancellor. (Exit PIENZENAU.) You, Seyboldtsdorf,— turn towards Straubing, and take possession of the hills! (Exit SEYBOLDTS-DORF.) You, Bern, attend to your troops; keep them sober, and keep sober yourself. (BERN is about to speak.) I know what you are going to say — that your mind is in such a befogged condition when you get up in the morning that you have to clear it slowly by drinking; but I am not much impressed by such proceedings, and you must be as ready to my hand to-day as my sword! (Exit BERN. Enter PREISING, with PAPPENHEIM. ERNEST goes eagerly toward them.) You, Preising! Well?

Preising.— Dead!

Ernest.— God have mercy upon her! Pappenheim, set out immediately to join Pienzenau in Haydeck's support. He will get the first blow that comes. (Exit PAPPENHEIM.) Tell me of her death!

Preising.— Did she not appear before you at the eleventh hour?

Ernest.— What do you mean?

Preising.— Of course not! At the last moment the executioner refused to do the deed,— so Sir Emeran had to offer one of his serfs his freedom before he could find any one to hurl her from the bridge! First she seemed to shrink from the contamination of his hands,— and was about to take the leap by herself,— but fear overcame her,— she faltered,— and he had to push her over! The infuriated people were eager to stone him for it, though every one knew the poor fellow only did it to earn his freedom. Not for the whole world would I witness such a sight again!

Ernest.— That will do, Preising. Some things have to be done blindly as if in sleep. This is one of them. The great wheel rolled over her, and now she is with Him who turns it. And now Albrecht must be thought of.

Preising.— Oh, he doubtless has heard of it before this. A fellow from Augsburg was at the castle, when Pappenheim stormed it; and tried to make a stanch resistance, but when she was led off to prison he hurried away, and surely went to Ingolstadt. He had come from her father!

Ernest.— Poor old man! Well, am I not putting my own flesh and blood at stake,— quite as well as yours? Our fates may even now be identical!

Preising.— And then?

Ernest.— Come what may, I have done my part, and will look after the graves. But there is still a possibility of a different result! The prince himself was not dead, but slumbering. (*They discover a village burning in the distance.*)

Preising.— Is that a fire?

Ernest.— That is my son! His sorrow is consuming itself in rage. Now, I foresee that all will end well! (*Calls out.*) Keep on, my son, keep on! The worse, the better!

Preising.— But is not that just what you wanted to prevent?

Ernest.— Oh, this is only one day! What he destroys I can build up again! Moreover, you may be sure, the emperor's eagle has spread his wings ere now, and before Albrecht is aware he will feel its talons. Then (*lifts his ducal staff*), Preising, I have a surprise for you to-day! (*PREISING is about to answer*) Come, come,— to horse! (*calls*) Otto von Bern! (*Exit with PREISING and soldiers.*)

(*Peasants, men, women, and children screaming and running in confused crowds, and shouting.*)

Some.— The Bohemian!

Others.— The Emperor!

Others.— Ingolstadt and Landshut!

All.— Woe unto us! Whither, oh, whither?

(Enter DUKE ALBRECHT, with many soldiers, fighting; among them THEOBALD,— with every shriek a blow.)

Albrecht.— Agnes Bernauer! Agnes Bernauer! Before you perish, hear! Death's name to-day is Agnes Bernauer,— and there is no such thing as pity! There is not a family in all Bavaria, high or low, who shall not weep to-morrow. There lies a Haydeck, here a Pienzenau,— there a Seyboldtsdorf. But Pappenheim still lives. Robber, traitor, villain! Where are you hiding? All of you, all of you, shout with me until the whole world re-echoes: Pappenheim,— robber, traitor, villain! Come forth!

Pappenheim (enters).— Who seeks me ?

Albrecht.— Both the devil and I, but I have the first turn! Draw and see if an honest blade will still serve you. (*Thrusts him back.*)

Theobald (comes forward).— And I! Ha, ha, ha! It is all black before my eyes! I'll close them and hew right and left! If I do not kill any one, I'll surely make some one kill me.

(*Re-enter ALBRECHT.*)

Albrecht.— Pappenheim is dead! What now? If I could only bring him back to life, and cut him down again with my every breath until the judgment day!

Theobald (stepping in front of ALBRECHT).— Slay me!

Albrecht.— You? And why? What are you thinking of?

Theobald.— Do you think I can be the bearer of such news to Augsburg?

Albrecht.— Do not go back! Stay with me, thou good, faithful soul!

Theobald.— With you! With you! If it had not been for you— There! (*Makes a thrust at ALBRECHT.*) That comes from Agnes Bernauer! And that! And that!

Albrecht (wards off the blows).— Are you mad? Rather give me your hand! You cannot force me to do you an injury!

Theobald.— But you must!

Albrecht.— Then I would have to do what I have never done before! What red face is that I see? That is a Degenberg. They must not escape (*rushes out*).

Theobald.— Every one shall die, friend or foe! (*Rushes towards his fellow soldiers, who are following ALBRECHT.*) Where to? Halt! (*Is pierced by a sword.*) Now, I am content! (*Falls and dies.*)

(*Enter WERNBERG.*)

Wernberg.— Victory! Victory! Victory! Where is Duke Albrecht? They are retreating before us as though we were monsters!

(*Enter ALBRECHT.*)

Albrecht.— But they shall all fall! The Danube, that choked her, I shall in turn choke with their corpses!

Wernberg.— Straubing has been stormed, and is as good as taken.

Albrecht.— They must be sure to capture the judge,— but on no condition to injure him. From his blood I will drink my last draught.

(*Enter FRAUENHOVEN.*)

Frauenhoven.— Hurrah! Hurrah! Now it is done! We have taken

him captive! (*To ALBRECHT, as soon as he sees him.*) We have taken your father.— You can bid him good day shortly. He has just been captured.

Albrecht.— Who commanded you to do so?

Frauenhoven.— What objection can there be? His own soldiers left him in the lurch, when he tried to put a stop to their flight. There they come with him, and the chancellor too.

Albrecht (turns away).— Release him at once!

Wernberg.— Will not to-morrow be soon enough?

Albrecht.— At once, I say! Man,— have you no feelings?

Wernberg.— Now? Before he has sworn peace, and insured our heads?

Albrecht (stamps impatiently).— Immediately!

Wernberg.— Then tell him yourself.

(Enter DUKE ERNEST with PREISING and HANS VON LAUBELFING and followers.)

Ernest.— That is my son! If he demands his father's surrender, here is my sword.

Albrecht.— No,— I remember you saved my life at Alling! Away I beg you!

Ernest.— At Alling, I did nothing but my duty, and desire no thanks for it.

Albrecht (turns away).— This hour brings a like rescue to you (*Catches sight of PREISING.*) But there is some one else, who will not escape so easily. Chancellor Preising, you have but one choice now,— to follow your companion Marshal von Pappenheim down to hell. (*Draws his sword.*)

Ernest.— For shame! For shame! My chancellor has done nothing but execute my orders,— and I had to give them twice before they were carried out.

Albrecht.— Then there is no one responsible but you,— no one I can blame but you? And still you dare to cross my path? Do not seek to avoid me?

Ernest.— Why should I? At Straubing as at Alling and at Regensburg, I have simply done my duty.

Albrecht.— Your duty? And God lets you fall into my hands? Is that His sentence upon one who has done his duty?

Ernest.— It is His way of testing you! Take heed lest you fall! Never before have two people stood before him as you and I now stand. (*Draws near to ALBRECHT.*) My son, you allied yourself with my worst enemy,— your false uncle: he was glad enough to scatter firebrands that should

bring destruction to my innocent country, but he would never have snatched your sword from you, if you had pointed it at your own heart. Come back to your father's side! That is the only way! Believe me,—I *had* to do what I have done! Some day you will understand, even if not before the last hour of your life. But I can weep with you,—for I sympathize with your sorrow!

Albrecht.—I beg you, cease! Let me think you know no more about it than the cold waters that took her life! Unless I call down curses upon you,—I must feel you are the dread Death-angel in a new disguise. No human being could ever have attacked her,—for by daylight he would have seen her,—and at night he would have heard her,—and in either case he would have been completely disarmed. Assure me that you are not human,—that your servants were not human,—then I will make the sign of the cross and flee.

Ernest.—But I am a human being, like yourself,—and ought to have been spared this dreadful task. But when you rise in open revolt against the existing order of things — both divine and human — then I am the one appointed to preserve it,—at whatever cost.

Albrecht.—The divine and human order of things! Ha, ha! You speak as if they were two rainbows, joined and bound about the world like a glowing ring of magic. It was the divine order that called her into life, that she might uplift what is degraded, and debase what is falsely uplifted. The human (*approaches ERNEST*) — the human — (*turns quickly away towards his followers*) Forward, friends! Onward! Who wishes to cease his work in the middle of the day? Duke Ernest is free,—let none touch a hair of his head,—there is not another Agnes he might kill — but we shall not rest until we have put the torch to his capital city!

Ernest.—Very well, my boy! You will only make Bavaria heap curses upon her instead of bewailing her sad fate. You will be murdering her brothers, not mine,—and even if you massacre the whole race of man you will never be able to stir again a single drop of blood in her veins. Are you going to force things to a point where even her own father will curse the hour of her birth, and she herself will steal out of Paradise with horror and shame, the first and the last one to leave without being damned? (*ALBRECHT stops and lets his sword fall. Trumpets are heard in the distance.*) That must be Louis of Ingolstadt. The destroyer grows impatient. On God's whole earth there is no man who can so utterly demolish what another has built up as he! One admonition I give you,—on earth as well as in heaven there is one who judges over you,—and before both your sentence will be severe! (*Trumpets draw nearer.*)

Voices.— Make way for the Imperial standard!

Other Voices.— The emperor's herald!

(Enter IMPERIAL HERALD with followers; *the colors in the lead.*)

Herald (*flourishing his sword*).— In the name of His Majesty, the Emperor, let no sword be shown, save this! (All the knights except ALBRECHT sheath their swords. Albrecht von Wittelsbach, Duke of Bavaria, you are summoned by your emperor.

(ALBRECHT approaches, with hesitating step, and slowly sheathes his sword.)

Albrecht.— Is this the place?

Herald.— Any spot will do,— for pronouncing the proscription!

Wernberg and Frauenhoven.— The bann! Has it come to this?

(Blare of trumpets from without.)

Preising (to ERNEST).— Still something more?

Ernest.— More than I desired, I fear.

Voices.— A legate! A legate from the Holy See!

Herald.— And with him comes excommunication from the church.

Many Voices (of the knights and the troopers).— Proscribed and excommunicated at one and the same time? Then it is high time — (threw down their arms.)

(Enter the LEGATE with followers, a burning taper borne before him and takes his position at the right of the herald.)

Herald (unfolding document).— We, Sigismund, Emperor of Rome by the Grace of God, and King of Hungary, Bohemia and Dalmatia, Protector of the Church and highest judiciary of the world,— hereby announce and declare: Inasmuch as you, Albrecht von Wittelsbach, two years and half ago, disturbed the order of the empire by open revolt at Regensburg and therefore were liable to the penalty of proscription, which was only withheld on account of your father's intervention; inasmuch as you, undeserving of such intervention, and of our mercy, have persisted in your defiance of both divine and human law and order,— and have a second time, with drawn sword, entered the field in open rebellion; We hereby command you by this, our order, that you surrender your sword at once unto your lord and father, Duke Ernest of Bavaria, and as his prisoner humbly await our further sentence (breaks off and looks at ALBRECHT.) (ALBRECHT thrusts his sword into the earth and leans upon it.) In default thereof, with our imperial authority, we banish you from the empire.

Ernest.— My son,— will you bear still more? Say the word, and I will raise my ducal staff!

Albrecht.— So be it! I did not know it was a capital crime to pick up a pearl instead of treading upon it. That is what I have done, and I will pay the penalty. Come on, Bear and Wolf,— swoop down, Eagle and Vulture, and tear me to pieces. Not one move will I make to defend myself, if you obey the imperial command!

Ernest.— Are you in such haste to appear before your judge? He has not yet counted the dead and the wounded. The battle field will bear terrible witness against you some day; all these ghastly dead will accuse you, saying: ‘We perished through Duke Albrecht’s wrath.’ Woe unto you if on that day a much mightier host does not rise up and declare for you,— silencing your accusers, if millions do not shout in reply — ‘But behold us! We all lived and died in peace and harmony because he conquered himself.’ That can only come through your clinging to life instead of cowardly renouncing it.

Albrecht.— And she, the innocent victim, must crumble to dust, while I — what a wretch I would have to be to listen to you!

Ernest.— You are not one of those who can reconcile justice by repentantly baring your breast to her sword. From you she demands just the opposite! Behold this banner, and learn a lesson! It is woven of the same thread as the doublet worn by every knight who follows it, and will likewise some day turn to dust and be scattered to the winds. But under it the Germans have been victorious in a thousand battles, and beneath its folds another thousand battles will vanquish the enemy; no one but a boy would wish to tear it to pieces, no one but a fool to patch it, instead of shedding his blood for it, holding every shred of it sacred. It is just the same for the prince who carries it. In our great need we poor mortals cannot tear a star from the skies to fasten to our standard,— and the Angel with the flaming sword who drove us from paradise into the desert — did not remain to pronounce judgment upon us. We have to put the mark upon a thing, worthless in itself, that gives it value; we have to raise dust above dust, until we are in the presence of Him who knows neither prince nor pauper, but only good and evil, and holds his representatives here to strict account. Woe to him who does not understand this wise regulation of the race; woe to him who does not respect it. Look into the depths of your own heart, and say: Father, before heaven and you have I sinned, but I will make atonement; I will live!

Albrecht.— Does it depend upon me alone?

Ernest.— This question suffices. God will give you strength, and even your poor dead wife will pray for you!

Albrecht.— My wife?

Ernest.— What I was forced to refuse her in life, I can grant her in death, for I know she is worthy. I could not acknowledge her in life but I myself will attend to her funeral rites, and at her tomb perpetuate memorial service for future generations, so that she will ever be cherished in sacred memory as the purest victim ever sacrificed to necessity in the course of the centuries.

Albrecht.— I will—I will do what I can! (*To the HERALD.*) To his Imperial Majesty, my respect! (*To ERNEST.*) To you, my lord and father (*is about to surrender his sword:* ERNEST goes toward him with open arms. (*ALBRECHT draws back and takes a stand.*) No, No! I cannot. May hell take me—but let it be blood for blood!

Ernest.— Stop! Take this first! (*Extends his ducal staff, which ALBRECHT involuntarily grasps.*) This makes you your father's judge; why be his murderer?

Preising.— Duke Ernest!

Ernest.— That was the decision,—not merely to spend the evening of my life in peace! I need his consent. If he can conscientiously refuse, I am undone!

Albrecht.— I am reeling; take it back,—it burns my fingers!

Ernest.— In the fear of our Lord, wield it for one year as I have done. Then, if you cannot acquit me, summon me, and I shall pronounce upon myself whatever sentence you may see fit. I shall be in the monastery at Andecks.

Albrecht (kneeling).— Not to the Emperor nor the empire do I kneel but to you! To you! My father!

Ernest.— Only wait, my son! My day's task was a hard one,—but perhaps I may still survive the year. (*Is about to go, PREISING following him.*) Remain! One monk is enough!

SAROJINI NAIDU, THE NEW HINDU POETESS

BY MILTON BRONNER

HERE recently came to America from across seas, a little volume of ninety-eight pages, containing some poems of pure gold, some written when the authoress was a girl of seventeen, and some when a matron of twenty-five. They are verses that reveal the inner recesses of the Oriental heart, for Sarojini Naidu, this precocious poetess, is a Hindu. Hindu love, Hindu legend, story, and superstition, Hindu scenery,—much of the multiform, colored life of India is placed before us. It is not in the method of guide-book poetry, nor in ballads and didactic lines. The verses are revelatory, because they have come straight from the heart.

To discover this kind of work is not a new sensation for those who make wide ranges in English and try to watch some of the lesser known books. Tea and indigo and precious stones are not the only things of value and of price that the Hindu has sent to England. Some of the natives, some of the brightest and best, have done their part in writing a Hindu-English literature.

If the Moros, Tagals, and Visayans had had an unbroken career in the Philippines for three thousand years; if they had had one great religion succeeded by another; if they had had as part of their heritage of culture great epics, striking dramas, and beautiful lyrics; if they had had all these things and then one hundred years hence, still under American rule, began to interpret in English verse that strange world of theirs, its legends and stories, its soul and its spirit, with by-pictures of the fauna and flora; if these things were edited and introduced and appreciated by the Edmund Clarence Stedmans and the William Dean Howells of the day, we in America would have a fair counterpart of what happens in England and in English literature.

The Englishman with all his conviction that the so-called Anglo-Saxon salt of the earth, has always been ready to lend sympathetic ears to the verses of these Hindu children, these children matured after the manner of the Oriental.

In speaking of the latest poetess, one naturally recurs to the career of Gurudev Dutt. The lives of the earlier and the later poetess run somewhat

parallel. Both came of the high-class caste. Both were given the advantages of education in Europe. Both were the daughters of brilliant fathers. Both produced notable work at an age when the majority of American and English youths are still in the college or university. Toru Dutt died a too soon at the age of twenty-one. At twenty-six Sarojini Naidu still lives although her ill health promises no long career. These strange-gifted daughters of a wonderful race seem to burn out their lives in the ardent pursuit of knowledge and the practice of song.

But there is another difference between Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu besides that of their fates. Despite all that her editor and champion, Mr Edmund Gosse, can advance for her, the fact still remains that Toru Dutt lacked the originality and initiative of the later poetess, even though she exceeded her in acquired knowledge. Toru Dutt was tri-lingual, being mistress of Hindu and French and, in a slightly less degree, of English. Her first published book, 'A Sheaf Gleaned from French Fields,' was, as its name implied, a gathering of translations into English from the French. Her other book of verse consisted of renderings in English ballad forms of old Indian tales, notably the beautiful old Sanskrit story of Savitri, who persuaded Yama, the god of death, to restore the soul of her husband to his dead body. The best that can be said of these new versions of old tales is that they read as if they were translations of Hindu or Sanskrit originals,—merit, but a doubtful one when it comes to accounting her as an original poetess.

With the passing of Toru in 1877, there was a dearth of high-class English verse by Hindus until, in 1890, four brilliant young college undergraduates issued a volume under the title 'Primavera.' One of these college poets filled the literary columns later, with the name of Stephen Phillips. Another was Lawrence Binyon, himself no mean poet. A third was Manmohan Ghose, who, as his name indicates, is a Hindu. His verse has the note of the latest Anglican æsthetic school. It has refinement, reserve, and gentle melancholy. Indeed this melancholy and the feeling that at twenty all youth has fled forever mark all the Hindu boys and girls who have written in our tongue. Ghose gravely says: "'Tis my twentieth year: dim, now, youth stretches behind me; breaking fresh at my feet, like an ocean, the world. And despised seem, now, those quiet fields I have travel'd: Eager to thee, I turn, Life, and thy visions of joy.'

Sarojini Chattopâdhyây, authoress of 'The Golden Threshold,'* also youthful and eager, and turning to visions of joy, despite her innate melancholy. Her father, Dr. Aghorenath Chattopâdhyây is descended

*Heinemann, London.

from an ancient family of Bhramangram, noted throughout eastern Bengal as patrons of Sanskrit learning. He took degrees at Edinburgh and Bonn and upon his return to India founded the Nizam College at Hyderabad, one of the wonderful cities of the interior where races and religions are most startlingly placed side by side. She gives a charming picture of this learned father and the life of which he is a center:

' My ancestors for thousands of years have been lovers of the forest and mountain caves, great dreamers, great scholars, great ascetics. My father is a dreamer himself, a great dreamer, a great man whose life has been a magnificent failure. I suppose in the whole of India there are few men whose learning is greater than his, and I don't think there are many men more beloved. He has a great white beard and the profile of Homer, and I laugh that brings the roof down. He has wasted all his money on two great objects: to help others, and on alchemy. He holds huge courts every day in his garden of all the learned men of all religions — Rajahs and beggars and saints and downright villains all delightfully mixed up, and all treated as one. And then his alchemy! Oh, dear, night and day the experiments are going on, and every man who brings a new prescription is welcome as a brother. But this alchemy is, you know, only the material counterpart of a poet's craving for beauty, the eternal beauty. 'The makers of gold and the makers of verse,' they are the twin creators that sway the world's secret desire for mystery; and, what in my father is the genius of curiosity — the very essence of all scientific genius — in me is the desire for beauty.'

Sarojini was the eldest of the children and all of them were taught English at an early age. Indeed she tells us that from the age of nine she never spoke any other language to her father or her mother, herself authoress of some graceful lyrics in Bengali. At eleven this child was sighing over a problem in algebra, when a poem sang in her brain and was duly committed to paper. At twelve she passed the matriculation of Madras University and was a nine days' wonder. At thirteen she wrote a long poem, modeled after 'Lady of the Lake,' composing thirteen hundred lines, in six days and also a drama of two thousand lines. Then came ill health and much reading between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. At fifteen there came a suitor, Dr. Govindurajulu Naidu, who, though of an old family, was not a Brahmin and the seemingly insuperable obstacle of caste therefore loomed up. As a consequence, to cure love's young dream, she was sent willy-nilly to England with a special scholarship from the Nizam and remained there, save for a short trip in Italy, until 1898, when she returned home. Before that, however, she studied at King's College, London, and at Girton. She arrived

in India in September of the year mentioned and in the following December scandalized all India by contemptuously breaking the traditions of her caste and marrying her lover. The great step once taken, the rest was happiness, save for the cloud caused by her delicate health.

'I have some very beautiful poems floating in the air,' she writes, 'and if the gods are kind I shall cast my soul like a net and capture them this year. If the gods are kind — and grant me a little measure of health. It is all need to make my life perfect, for the very "Spirit of delight" that Shelley wrote of dwells in my little home; it is full of the music of birds in the garden and children in the long, arched verandah.'

These children are celebrated in her book of verses, being poetical called Lord of Battles, the Sun of Victory, the Lotus-Born, and Jewel of Delight. A great deal of mother love was expended in the making even such lines as these to the little Padmaja:

'Lotus maiden, you who claim
All the sweetness of your name,
Lakshmi, fortune's queen, defend you,
Lotus-born like you, and send you
Balmy moons of love to bless you,
Gentle joy-winds to caress you.
Lotus maiden, may you be
Fragrant of all ecstasy.'

So much for the woman. As for the verses she herself says: 'I am not a poet really. I have the vision and the desire, but not the voice. If I could write just one poem full of beauty and the spirit of greatness, I should be exultantly silent forever; but I sing just as the birds do, and my song is ephemeral.'

Therein she has pointed out one of the chief beauties of her product. Her verses are songs. They have the authentic lyric cry. But they have something more significant, something rarer. In the forms familiar to the West she expresses something of the soul of the East. It is not done so much by the rendition of Eastern legends, for she has avoided these. It is not done particularly by the presentation of pictures from Hindu life of to-day, although she has given some of these. Her particular quality is something subtler, something of spirit woven in the very text of the verses, something that crops out in similes so startling, so foreign, so fresh, and so beautiful as this from a land of cobras and those who master them:

'Like a serpent to the calling voice of flutes,
Glides my heart into thy fingers, O my Love!'

Not less beautiful in form and Oriental in matter is the poem on ‘Suttee,’ beginning:

‘ Lamp of my life, the lips of Death
Have blown thee out with their sudden breath.’

But it is time to give a sample of these verses, taking a stanza from ‘Palanquin-Bearers’:

‘ Lightly, oh, lightly we bear her along,
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;
She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream,
She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream.
Gayly, oh, gayly we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.’

Even more musical in the lilt of its lines is this one on ‘Wandering Singers’:

‘ Where the voice of the wind calls our wandering feet,
Through echoing forest and echoing street,
With lutes in our hand ever singing we roam,
All men are our kindred, the world is our home.

‘ Our lays are of cities whose lustre is shed,
The laughter and beauty of women long dead;
The sword of old battles, the crown of old kings,
And happy and simple and sorrowful things.

‘ What hope shall we gather, what dreams shall we sow ?
Where the wind calls our wandering footsteps we go.
No love bids us tarry, no joy bids us wait:
The voice of the wind is the voice of our fate.’

As even more typical of India itself, perhaps this should be quoted, reminding one of a little-known passage in the writings of the late Lafcadio Hearn:

THE SNAKE CHARMER

‘ Whither dost thou hide from the magic of my flute call ?
In what moonlight tangled meshes of perfume,
Where the clustering keovas* guard the squirrels’ slumber,
Where the deep woods glimmer with the jasmine’s bloom ?

*A tree of India.

' I'll feed thee, O beloved, on milk and wild red honey,
 I'll bear thee in a basket of rushes, green and white,
 To a palace-bower where golden-vested maidens
 Thread with mellow laughter the petals of delight.

' Whither dost thou loiter, by what murmuring hollows,
 Where oleanders scatter their ambrosial fire?
 Come, thou subtle bride of my mellifluous wooing,
 Come, thou silver-breasted moonbeam of desire!

Redolent of the Hindu world too are such stanzas as the following from men's voices from a ' Harvest Hymn ':

' Lord of the lotus, lord of the harvest,
 Bright and munificent lord of the morn!
 Thine is the bounty that prospered our sowing,
 Thine is the bounty that nurtured our corn.
 We bring thee our songs and our garlands for tribute,
 The gold of our fields and the gold of our fruit;
 O giver of mellowing radiance, we hail thee,
 We praise thee, O Surya, with cymbal and flute.'

And this one for the women:

' Lord of the Universe, Lord of our being,
 Father eternal, ineffable Om!
 Thou art the Seed and the Scythe of our harvests,
 Thou art our Hands and our Heart and our Home.
 We bring thee our lives and our labors for tribute,
 Grant us thy succor, thy counsel, thy care.
 O Life of all life and all blessing, we hail thee,
 We praise thee, O Brahma, with cymbal and prayer.'

It is difficult in the short limits of a magazine article to give an adequate idea of the range of the forty poems that constitute the volume. There are village songs, autumn songs, and love songs; there are chants of Coromandel fishers, of Hindu weavers, and of gypsies; there are transcripts from the life as seen in the streets of Hyderabad; there are poems to mortals like the Nizam, and to immortals like Buddha and some of the older gods; there are even translations from lovely things in the Persian and the Urdu. On one page, strangely enough, is a note that sounds like the Celtic glamour of Yeats or ' Fiona MacLeod ':

' Honey, child, honey, child, the world is full of pleasure,
 Of bridal songs and cradle songs, and sandal-scented leisure.
 Your bridal roses are in the loom, silver and saffron glowing,
 Your bridal cakes are on the hearth: O whither are you going ?

' The bridal songs and cradle songs have cadences of sorrow,
 The laughter of the sun to-day, the wind of death to-morrow.
 Far sweeter sound the forest notes where forest streams are falling;
 O mother mine, I cannot stay, the fairy-folk are calling.'

And then just a few pages farther along one encounters a dainty thing like this cradle song that shows how similar is the mother heart whether the blood that pulses in it be Hindu or English:

' From groves of spice,
 O'er fields of rice,
 Athwart the lotus-stream,
 I bring for you,
 Aglint with dew
 A little lovely dream.

' Sweet, shut your eyes,
 The wild fireflies
 Dance through the fairy neem;*
 From the poppy-bole
 For you I stole
 A little lovely dream.

' Dear eyes, good night,
 In golden light
 The stars around you gleam;
 On you I press
 With soft caress
 A little lovely dream.'

It is easy to exaggerate the importance and permanent value of this verse. By the very nature of things the personality of the poetess adds to the charm of her work. There is something fascinating and romantic about the little rebel,—smasher of caste traditions and ignorer of Hindu poetical conventions. She has brought a new note into the English verse of the day,

*A tree of India.

a note not directly derived even from the great Sanskrit poems nor to be seen in the translations from them. In the classics of India we will find poetical 'counters' as conventionalized as those in the verses of the poets who surrounded the Stuarts of England. If, in cavalier poems, breasts were always snow, lips coral, teeth pearls, and hair gold, so in Sanskrit poetry and its Hindu offspring warriors were always tiger-waisted, while women of beauty had faces like the lotus, lips like the asoka blossom, and breasts like the jasmine. All these things Sarojini Naidu ignored or cast aside, working with material fresh in English verse and in a new way. We have had poems before about Hindu life and scenes, but they were written from the outside by those who by reason of birth could never fully understand. For once we hear from the inside and the voice is one of sympathetic charm and beauty.

TWO DREAMS

BY FRANCES BARBER

YOU had a dream, and I had a dream:
And each dreamed as the other
Of loving one with a fearful love
That life had not power to smother.

You loved not *me* in your scant-told dream:
And I loved a dark-eyed stranger:
My lips met his in a black, black night —
And swift came a sense of danger!

But I have waked with my heart still yours —
Unchanged by a dream's impression;
While you stand thinking your new strange thoughts,
And you shrink from your soul's confession.

Ah! yours was in truth, O shame-faced one,
The dream of a faithless lover!
And mine was the dream that God sent to me
That I your dream might discover!

THE ETHICAL MESSAGE OF RICHARD HOVEY'S POEM IN DRAMAS

AMELIE VON ENDE

THE summer wind was blowing over the prairie. Through the heaving sea of plump grasses wound a road, white in the glare of the sunshine. There were three of us, each filled with the love of the open, and as we rested under a clump of willows by the wayside, and our eyes followed the windings of that road, one took from his pocket a little book with a quaint cover-design, the profiles of three young men against the shadow of a crescent moon, and began to read:

'Down the world with Marna
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind
Vagabond and unconfined.
Roving with the roving rain
Its unboundaried domain.
Kith and kin of wanderkind,
Children of the sea!'

The other continued:

'Marna of the far quest
After the divine!
Striving ever for some goal
Past the blundergod's control!
Dreaming of potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears!'

This was my introduction to the poetry of Richard Hovey. Life and death separated the three comrades of that June siesta under the willows by the wayside. But the vision which the 'Songs from Vagabondia' evoked, proved a strong guide in years of striving

'for some goal
Past the blundergod's control.'

The 'Songs from Vagabondia' gave voice to a profound faith in life, conscious joy in the mere fact of earthborn existence, and a frank disdain of the commonplace world which infringes upon the rights of personality. Foreign poets had sung these themes with an abundance of sentiment, pathos and dramatic fervor; or with an insistent controversial aggressiveness. But it remained for two American poets to face life squarely and sing sanely. The authors of the 'Songs from Vagabondia' struck neither the melancholy nor the militant key. Their love of earth and their joy of life saved them from the hopeless pessimism of their confrères in European letters, and gave them confidence in the ultimate triumph of their ideals.

This faith in the future gave wings to Richard Hovey's genius. It made him eager to treat the eternal problem of the individual in its relation to society, in a poem of ample proportions instead of a play in prose. He wisely chose the dramatic form, but a mediæval setting for the embodiment of his ideas, and planned 'Launcelot and Guenevere,' a poem in drama. The work when completed was to treat the three phases of this relation. The individual's revolt against society, its renunciation of self, and the final reconciliation between both. It was a stupendous task to undertake. Only a mind trained in the philosophies of the world that had shaped it, churches and its states could conceive such a project. The author of the essay, 'The Ducre or Goethe's and Marlowe's Faust,' which he read at the School of Philosophy at Farmington when only twenty-five, had such a mind. Only a poetic imagination that in its creative moments could shake off the burden of knowledge, and find expression untrammeled by conventional formulas, could hope to reach the goal. Richard Hovey had such an imagination. Had he lived, the world would have one more monumental work to name among its great poems. His death left it a torso, but one of beautiful proportions and a truly sacred inspiration.

Few readers of the four dramas published during his life dreamed of the scope of this work. To them their greatness was in the drift of their thought, the dignity and tenderness of their sentiment, and the rhythmic beauty of their language. Now that the fragments have been collected and edited with introduction and notes by Mrs. Hovey, and a preface by Bliss Carman, the outlines of the structure Richard Hovey had intended to rear become visible, his purpose clearly defined. The four completed dramas followed by a reading of the fragments leave an impression of architectural grandeur and strength like some wonderful temple, where every arch and every column is a thing of beauty in itself, and is yet subordinate to the whole. The plan for this poem in dramas which Richard Hovey sketched in 1898 is proof of his high conception of the poet's office. It is prophetic.

n the masks which foreshadow the events constituting the plot of the
tramas that follow. It is priestly in the dramas themselves, which treat
the problem of the individual choice,' a problem of conscience, as it presents
itself in the progress of evolution.

For Richard Hovey was not satisfied with the apparent solution of the
conflict between the individual choice and the social code at which the
Arthurian legend had arrived. He saw the eternal significance of that
greatest of human problems and knew that its real solution was yet to come —
in some realm

‘ Past the blundergod’s control, in those potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears.’

This modified essentially his conception of the characters. He did not sit
in judgment over them and pronounce them guilty or not guilty, deal out to
them the hero’s wreath or doom them to don the penitent’s garb. They were
to him natural products in that chain of cause and effect which governs life
in all its manifestations. He knew that purity is not in ignorance of evil, and
that perfection is not in elimination and renunciation, when he wrote in 1889
those lines, the first written of all the series, which were intended to be the
last speech in ‘Avalon’:

‘ It doth not now repent me of my sins;
They oft were my salvation. But for them
I might have lain forever in my dream
In the child-hearted valleys. They, like wolves,
Roused me from my as yet unearned repose
And drove me toiling up this arduous hill
Where from the summit now mine eyes look out
At peace upon a peaceful universe.
Nay, sweet, our sins are but God’s thunder-clouds.
That hide the glorious sun a little while;
And afterwards the fields bring forth their fruit.’

These lines elucidate his ethical viewpoint and offer a key to his conception
of the old myth of Launcelot and Guenevere.

Through this insight into the psychology of human conduct Richard
Hovey was enabled to give us in the poem in dramas an analysis of the
relations between the right of the individual and the law of society. He
showed us how the individual seeking its self-realization revolted against
this law; how when the inevitable conflict in its soul marred the joy of con-
summation, it sought peace in the consolation of faith and the fulfilment of

social duties, and failed in its quest. For to Richard Hovey the right of human soul to its own self, the right of individual choice, was above all laws of the church and society. Renunciation is a compromise both coward and insincere. It says to the individual, not 'To thine own self be true' but 'To thine own self be false.' Hence the solution of the conflict through renunciation cannot be final. It can be achieved only by realization under conditions of peace and harmony. Knowing that this was impossible in the Arthurian past as in present society, the poet chose for the final drama the 'harmonody,' a mythical land of heart's desire: Avalon. Hovey's attitude toward life was not negative and destructive, but affirmative and constructive. As he indicated in his Schema, the revolt of the individual was the thesis, renunciation, the antithesis, and reconciliation of individual and society the synthesis. That he could have accomplished his desire of giving the old myth this new form without once observing his point of view and becoming the preacher instead of the poet, no one can doubt who has read the four completed dramas and the fragments.

Somewhere in the 'Songs from Vagabondia' occur these lines:

'No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must.'

These words are significant. Richard Hovey was not the exponent of any one philosophy or social system. He studied them all, accepted them when they seemed to fulfil their mission and answer the questions which life had raised and rejected them, if they failed in their effect upon the lives governed by their principles, to produce the one thing needed — peace and harmony. For neither revolt against nor obedience to the tenets of religion or the code of society favor the self which we are in duty to ourselves and others bound to develop and to perfect; they do not look for its realization. The poet arrived at this conclusion logically and irrevocably and accepted it without demurring. For although he had seen that the attempt of Launcelot and Guenevere to set their relation to each other above their relation to the world is as disastrous as their attempt to set their relation to the world above their relation to each other, he is not discouraged. Launcelot complains to Dubric in the second act of the 'Holy Grail':

'I have seen day by day unworthy loves
Taking in vain the name of that which was,
So help me, Christ, howe'er an act of sin
In both our hearts a holy mystery.
I have seen myself, unworthy that I am,

Chosen of men a captain and exemplar,
 And by the same lips that exalted me
 Debased with attribution of vile thought
 Until the holiest secrets of my heart
 Showed shameful and malign, and so deformed
 Became a scripture for the vulgar spirit
 To justify its filth with. So I saw
 That that which was the cause of sin in others,
 Howe'er itself immaculate at heart,
 Must be by circumstance made interdict.'

But the poet knows better. His faith in life is so great that if the present fails him, he turns to the future. What else is his Avalon but the realization of those

‘ potential years
 When no day shall dawn in fears ? ’

What else but that perfection of the human conscience, when every individual will be judge of his own actions, will bear all consequences and all responsibilities, will learn the lesson thereof and turn evil into good. That is the ethical message conveyed by the speech of Launcelot.

In the evolution of the conflict from revolt to renunciation, and from renunciation to reconciliation, the poet sheds the light of his philosophy upon contingent problems. His ideal of purity is essentially different from that embodied in the traditional type of the stainless knight, be it Galahad or Parsifal. In the mosque of Taliesin which introduced the second part of the poem, his coming is thus announced:

‘ In him ye shall behold how light can look upon darkness and forgive,
 How love can walk in the mire and take no stain therefrom.’

When the knights go out upon their quest of the Grail, and are lured into the garden of a brothel, his Galahad sees nought of the evil about him, only the beauty.

‘ How beautiful are lilies! See them raise
 Their crowned heads like royalties above
 Their lowlier fellows. There’s no king on earth
 So simply all-sufficient to his life
 As there. There is a touch of God in them.’

Richard Hovey’s Galahad is not an ascetic turning away with horror from scenes of vice, but by virtue of his parentage, the sacramental quality of the

love that called him into being, is unsusceptible to evil. If he dies a maid it is not, as Mrs. Hovey suggests in her notes, because he had taken the vow of chastity, but because he had not found that love which is both of the flesh and of the soul, such a love as had given birth to him.

Richard Hovey's noble conception of friendship is typified in the relation between Launcelot and Arthur. Though he had been the first to love her, Launcelot remained no less a friend to Arthur, when Arthur made Guenevere his queen. When their love had found its consummation, was the conflict between that love and his friendship that marred the harmony of their relations, and led to their renunciation. The parting between Arthur and Launcelot in the second act of 'The Holy Grail' is full of nobility and pathos. So is Arthur's dignified attitude in the first and only complete scene of 'King Arthur,' when Mordred, his son by Morganse, accuses Launcelot and Guenevere. But when Arthur, bound by the traditions of his office to uphold the law, condemns Guenevere to the stake, Launcelot's loyalty to the friend is overcome by his love for Guenevere; he rescues her and takes her to the castle of his fathers, for now she is his own. Yet as soon as he learns of Mordred's treachery, he hurries to Arthur's assistance. Guenevere, too, has urged him to go and herself joins the monks who set out to minister to the dying and the dead. But both arrive on the battlefield when the personal combat between father and son is over, when Mordred is dead and Arthur is dying.

Throughout the whole work one feels the modifying idea, that a great love like that of Launcelot and Guenevere shapes the characters of the lovers and develops the best that is in them. The poet knew the ever-recreative, ever-renascent element of growth is love, when he said in that short fragment of 'Astolat,' which was to have been the drama of jealousy,

‘Not from our wills it sprang,
This love of ours that overcame our will,
Then from the will of God — for every effort
Must have a will somewhere behind it.’

He knew that such a love would survive all ordeals; and in his notes on 'Astolat' occurs this statement: 'The necessity for experience in order to come to one's self.' When Launcelot, failing in his renunciation wanders about with clouded mind and is brought by his friend Tristram to Elaine to be cured, it is as natural for him to bestow upon the girl the gift of his friendship and his gratitude, as it is for Guenevere to fear that the intrusion of a third might prove a discord in her relations to Launcelot, already disturbed by his renunciation. But there is in her attitude nothing ignoble, nothing

small, and as much as can be gathered from the notes and Mrs. Hovey's elucidating commentary, Richard Hovey's Guenevere was to stand apart from other Gueneveres by her dignified bearing in the conflict. Had he finished 'Astolat,' he would have presented jealousy in the light of his rare, psychological insight and given us a new poetical conception of the old theme.

When Richard Hovey closed the inspired pæan upon love in 'Avalon' with the lines:

‘And yet the earth hath something of its own
It never told the moon, and the moon hides
In silent secret in its charmed heart
The earth can never know—’

he touched a note and sounded a motive which was really absent from his works,—the sanctity of self. It has never been expressed in more reverent terms than in that scene between Arthur and Guenevere in the third act of 'The Holy Grail':

Arthur:

O Guenevere, you have made me the happiest man
To-night in all my kingdoms. I have craved
Long years, and have not spoken. I have held
Your selfhood far more royal than my crown
And your soul's privacy more sacred from
Irreverent entrance than the sanctuary.
Your husband, I have held your loveliness
Exempt; your king, I ne'er profaned your will.

Guenevere:

O sir, you have been royal.

Arthur:

Nay, I think
That I have been but just; there's nought so dear
To man or woman as that crag of life
Where each walks lonely. There's no bond on earth,
Nor wedlock, nor the sacred rule of kings
So strong that it may overbear this right
Of each soul to itself the holy place
Of the heart's temple no man lawfully
May enter, save he bear the high election

Of priest to the divinity within.
You have withheld from me; it was your right
And I have not complained.'

This then seems to be the message that the poet conveyed to us through his poem in dramas: to remain true to one's self, to hold it sacred, to perfect it through love for another self, held equally sacred, and thus to realize the ideal of a truly sacramental union. There is no poem in American literature and perhaps in the English language inspired by a loftier ideal and so far as can be judged from the completed dramas and the fragments, there are few it could have been compared with as an artistic achievement, had the poet lived to complete it. He treated a problem of all lives from the standpoint of a philosophy which bids fair to survive all revaluation of values. He was not an optimist, blind to the limitations of human nature, neither was he blind to its possibilities. He knew that in the progress of evolution the future will grant what the present withholds.

A REINCARNATION RING

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

SINCE the days of the poet Gray and his pensive musings within the precincts of the dead, a new theology, or a new psychology (if all that be new) has arisen, which weaves into the Elegy idea that of a mysterious *Resurgam*. According to this new-old thought, the sleeper within the funereal pale shall undoubtedly rise again—rise without his own knowledge, it may be, and again chase the flying ball of mundane affairs! The ‘mute inglorious Milton’ yet shall sing out his full soul. And uneasy ‘Cromwell, guiltless of his country’s blood,’ shall spring up, and satisfy his yearning thirst for power and statescraft. Indeed, if desire remain unsatisfied, when we slip this mortal coil, we must return to execute that desire.

Apropos, there has recently come into my hands so lovely a specimen of what might be called The New Elegy in a Country Churchyard,—so delicately embodying the awakening and reincarnating principle,—that I am bringing it to POET LORE fresh from the tender thought of the New England singer whose work it is (and by her express wish, *anonymous* work). . . When you have listened to the sweet tones of her requiem (which is, also, as a *révéillé*), I will ask you to compare her *motif* with that of a unique German mystic and poet, Christian Wagner, in a curious little volume entitled, ‘*Neuer Glaube*,’ in which in a sort of catechism, with the frequent oracular delivery, ‘*Der Dichter Sagt*,’ the mild and metaphysical German voices his belief in the ‘return wave’ of life. First, our own New England lyrist as follows:

PHEBE

Since in thy grave, O youthful maid,
Thy fair and silvery form was laid,
Full fifty times the summers fleet
Have crossed the hills, with radiant feet.
What marvel if thy shining name,
Thy crescent wreath of virgin fame
Be nigh forgotten by thy kin?
For every year men garner in
The purple hay in nodding loads,
And sweat along earth’s dusty roads;

A REINCARNATION RING

And Life her frail newcomer brings,
 And minds must reckon with many things:
 But round thy low, moss-blackened stone
 The soft-breathed winds thy dirge intone,
 ‘Phebe! Phebe!

Few-summered Phebe!’
 How light, my love, thy spirit feet
 Went forth, a heavenly dawn to meet!
 No dewdrops here on feathery grass
 Are strewn like pearls to feel thee pass,
 The kine bring home no milk for thee,
 Thou hast no apples from the tree
 Thou shook’st of old. Around thy brow
 No mortal sees the beauty now.
 Yet, early morn, the wildbirds flit
 Where near the sod thy age is writ,
 And, twittering, laugh thy silver name —
 As though they knew what sweetest flame
 Of Beauty, Peace, and Love is thine
 In that old Sunrise Realm divine:

‘Phebe! Phebe!
 Sweet dawn, O Phebe!’
 But if, indeed, thy heart desire
 To light some good man’s household fire,
 To scent his orchard-trees in bloom,
 And share again earth’s grassy tomb,
 Thy childlike mind shall have surcease
 From the wise, elder Paths of Peace.
 Desire will find thee mortal birth
 In vexed and shadowy vales of earth:
 The Moon, thy mighty namesake old,
 Each month renews her horn of gold,
 And moves, in all her changing grace,
 Across thy eastward burial place —
 As though she pledged thee: ‘Follow still
 From birth to birth, thy cup to fill,

Phebe! Phebe!
 Fear not, O Phebe!’

And now, for Christian Wagner, in his own original, and also in such rendering as has occurred to the present writer:

TRANSFIGURED

‘ Tausendmale werd’ ich schlafen gehen,
 Wandrer ich, so müd’ und lebensatt;
 Tausendmale werd’ ich auferstehen,
 Ich Verklärter, in der sel’gen Stadt.

‘ Tausendmale werde ich noch trinken,
 Wandier ich, aus des Vergessens Strom;
 Tausendmale werd’ ich niedersinken,
 Ich Verklärter, in dem sel’gen Dom.

‘ Tausendmale werd’ ich von der Erden
 Abschied nehmen durch das finstre Thor;
 Tausendmale werd’ ich selig werden,
 Ich Verklärter, in dem sel’gen Chor.’

‘ Sage mir, ewiges Licht:
 Ist nicht
 Jegliche Blute
 Eine zur Wiederscheinung gelangte urewige Mythe ?
 Jegliche Rose
 Eines verachteten Dornstrauchs Apotheose ?’

A thousand times — a thousand! I shall sleep,
 I, wanderer, life-sick, and fain to rest:
 A thousand times from slumber shall upleap,
 Transfigured, in the city of the Blest.

A thousand times — a thousand! I shall drink,—
 I, wanderer, where the Stream Forgetful rolls:
 A thousand times — a thousand! I shall sink,
 Transfigured, in the blissful Fane of Souls.

A thousand times shall Earth hear my goodbys,
 At her low Door unlighted of the sun:
 A thousand times — a thousand! I shall rise,
 Transfigured,— with the Blessed Choir made one.

Tell me, Eternity’s Light,
 Have I gathered aright ?
 Is not each bloom
 Some beauteous myth of the olden, released from the tomb ?
 Each rose of the morn
 Some glad apotheosis reached by the long-despised thorn ?

THE SECRET OF LIFE

(Translated from the French of Leconte de Lisle, by C. R. Crittenden.)

THE secret of life is in the closed tomb:
What is no more is only what has been;
And the final nothing of beings and things
Is the sole sense of their reality.

O old Illusion, the first of causes!
Why wake us from out our eternity,
If, thyself but vanity and a snare,
The secret of life is in the closed tomb?

Men, beasts, gods, and world illimitable
All that has burst forth, killed by thy changes
Through eons thou makest to be born and decay
What is no more is only what has been.

Crossing all ages, splendid or morose,
The spirit, rapid light, borne on their wing,
Fatally understood its own emptiness
And the final nothing of beings and things.

Yes, without thee, thou nothing, nothing hadst lived:
Neither love, crimes, virtues, poisons, nor flowers.
The vanished dream of thy begotten works
Is the sole sense of their reality.

Rest not inert at the sill of the closed door,
Man! Know to die at last is to have been;
Out of the mysterious vortex of things,
Search at the bottom of the tomb, really
The secret of life.